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# The Mennonite

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Nov. 12, 2014

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Interim Editor
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# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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JAN 11 '84

## Inside are these New Year's articles

- Take a good look at authority
- They renewed a broken commitment
- The cross summons us to prayer

"When E. F. Hutton speaks, people listen." "Everyone please rise. Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States." "Dear Abby: My boyfriend and I have been going together for a year and have a big problem. . . ."

Authority is something we all desire. In the name of it some are willing to die, some to kill. It is claimed by king and pauper alike.

"And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority" (Mark 1:22). Authority was something Jesus commanded—a quality of his that left an impression on people. But what is authority?

Examine authority closely and we discover two main characteristics. Examples can help us understand these.

The movie *Gandhi* features a scene in which Gandhi enters a courtroom to be on trial. People slowly stand. Even those who oppose him come to their feet on his behalf. It is as though Gandhi's very presence commands authority.

People still stand in the presence of certain individuals. Go into any court of law and you will be asked to stand when the judge enters the room. I am told that years ago the church in which I grew up began its worship services when the minister entered and the people stood up.

These examples show that certain people command authority. Yet there is a difference between people standing when Gandhi enters a courtroom and when a judge enters. A judge commands authority tied to a position or rank. If she were stripped of her official title no one would rise on her behalf. The judge could walk into a restaurant or theater and it is unlikely that those around her, ignorant of who she is, would stand in respect. Gandhi, unlike the judge, commanded an authority not connected to position. He was not President Gandhi or Reverend Gandhi or Your Honor. His authority came from within. We may attribute the respect paid him to his high ethical standards, his religious devotion, even his popularity. There is a difference in the kind of authority the judge possesses and the authority of Gandhi.

The New Testament helps us clarify these two facets of authority. The Greek language—in which the NT was written—uses two words to refer to authority: *dunamis* and *exousia*. *Dunamis* is an impersonal authority or power. It commands authority or power. It commands authority by might. Dunamis is the root for our word dynamite. Dunamis may denote the authority commanded by a gun or a fierce animal or a muscular brute.

*Exousia* is a personal authority. It derives its authority from within and is based upon personally held principles, beliefs and values. New Testament writers used the word exousia to denote God's authority.

**Dunamis and exousia.** (1) The *goal* of dunamis is to command blind obedience, whereas the goal of exousia is to exercise informed obedience. When draft registration began in 1980, some said that the age for registration should start at 21, arguing that 18-year-olds are too young to make decisions about how to serve their country. This idea was turned down by military representatives, primarily because it is easier to command authority over an 18-year-old than a 21-year-old. Older recruits are more prone to think before acting on an order, the generals argued, while younger recruits are more likely to act because ordered to do so without questioning the command. Blind obedience, it seems, is a prerequisite for effective battle.

Research by psychologists Stanley Milgram and D. C. Bock indicates that the appeal for dunamis' blind obedience is not unique to the military. In a study conducted in 1966, Milgram found that two-thirds of his subjects were willing to administer painful electrical shocks to another person simply because they had been told to do so by an authority figure. Milgram drew parallels between his subject's unquestioning obedience and the behavior of Nazi war criminals who murdered innocent people because they had been ordered to do so. Milgram's work received a lot of attention and thus overshadowed later research done by D. C. Bock, who found a clear relationship between religious beliefs and obedience. Bock noted in non-believers a trend of refusal to yield to an authority's commands. Believers, on the other hand, were the most obedient at "delivering more shock than any other group." At a

*Mike Klassen*

# Take a good look at **authority**

basic level, Bock's research would indicate that when dunamis reigns in the church, the door is open for the unholy wedding of religious zeal and destructive violence.

2. Dunamis' *origins* are external to the religious experience whereas exousia originates from within that experience. An example of a religious people whose focus of authority lay outside their personal experience of God is the Pharisees of Jesus' day. In Matthew 5 Jesus asks his disciples to strive for a righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees—which was a righteousness that was externally accessible. For example, murder was seen by the Pharisees as morally wrong but the hate-filled thoughts of the heart were not an issue. Similarly, adultery was wrong and punishable, but lust was out of the jurisdiction of religious judgment and punishment. By codifying the inner direction of the spirit into an external, accessible and visible program of morality, the Pharisees were able to erect a religious ethic that was manageable. As such, the "righteousness of the Pharisees" was a righteousness that allowed for a reasonable degree of self-interest. It was a righteousness that might ask for self-discipline but certainly not self-denial; it might ask a person to bear a yoke but not a cross.

Ignoring Jesus' teaching that the heart of the deed was not in the external act itself but in the inner thoughts and decisions that preceded it, the Pharisees often confused their word with God's. In part it was this confusion that lay at the heart of their execution of Jesus. In the same way the church, by appealing to dunamis instead of exousia, has been able to participate in some of the most heinous crimes against humanity and claim the authority of God in their actions.

3. The *nature* of dunamis is coercion based on fear, whereas the nature of exousia is freedom based on security. A gun commands authority in a coercive way with the prerequisite being fear. If I am not fearful of being shot and have come to believe that Jesus was right when he said that I ought not to fear the person who can destroy my body but the one who can destroy my soul, the person and his gun no longer command authority over me. In fact, the tables are turned. I am now the one in control, or rather, Christ in me is in control.

An example of the power of exousia is seen in the story of an Asiatic monk by the name of Telemachus who lived during the final days of the Roman Empire. Disturbed by the games of murder played at the Coliseum, the monk confronted dunamis by leaping into an arena where gladiators were fighting to the death, and shouting, "In the name of Christ, forbear!" At first the crowd was humored, but slowly they became angered as Telemachus stood his ground. Finally they shouted, "Kill him!" and one of the gladiators granted the request. In the slaying of the monk dunamis asserted its authority and, it seemed at first, realized it. But soon a strange thing happened. The crowd became less boisterous and less eager to see the fighting. Slowly people began to leave the Coliseum until no one was left, not even a gladiator. It was soon after Telemachus' witness that people quit coming to the games and in a short while the bloody recreation ended. By his testimony to the power of exousia one lonely monk, convinced of the wrongness of dunamis, was able to end needless bloodshed and assert proper authority over a nation of people.

4. Dunamis' *orientation* is toward the self and motivated and informed by external standards, whereas exousia is other-centered and motivated and informed by inner discovery. In her book *Journey Inward, Journey Outward*, Elizabeth O'Connor says that before the church can provide a valuable and unique assistance to people, it must first turn inward for self-examination. Before there can be a journey outward, there must be a journey inward.

The author's idea expresses well the effect of exousia in the Christian mission, whether that includes relief programs, evangelistic campaigns or the ministry of peace. By beginning with the question "What are the needs of my neighborhood?" rather than "What needs do I have which are being left unattended?"; by asking first, "How many souls can I save?" instead of "How is my soul doing?" we turn exousia on its head and open ourselves to the influence of dunamis.

5. The *expectations* of dunamis are that one possesses credentials, degrees, rank or other signs of achievement and social approval, whereas exousia expects that the person will listen and be obedient to the spirit within. In Mark 9 the disciples show a penchant for dunamis' appeal to rank when they argue about who among them is the greatest. Jesus responds to them by saying, in essence, "Rank and superiority are common values in the world, but let it not be so with you." Later Jesus explains the "pecking order" of the kingdom: "With you, the first shall be last . . . and servant of all."

In the following paragraph Jesus explains more fully the expectations of exousia to his slow-learning followers. Here the disciples snub a man who is casting out demons because he was not of their little group. "We forbade him," they tell Jesus, "because he was not following us." Jesus responds, "Don't hinder him from doing this. He who is not against us is for us." Jesus instructs his disciples not to judge people because of the cards they carry or the references they possess or the religious group to which they belong. Jesus asks them rather to first see what comes from within and then respond.

**Which is your authority?** The television and movie industry has, through its portrayal of the North American Indian, led us to believe that the Indian was a bloodthirsty savage bent on violence and destruction. Actually the majority of Indian tribes included pacifism in

*Dunamis* is an impersonal authority or power. It commands by might.

*Exousia* is a personal authority. It derives power from within and is based on personally held principles, beliefs and values.

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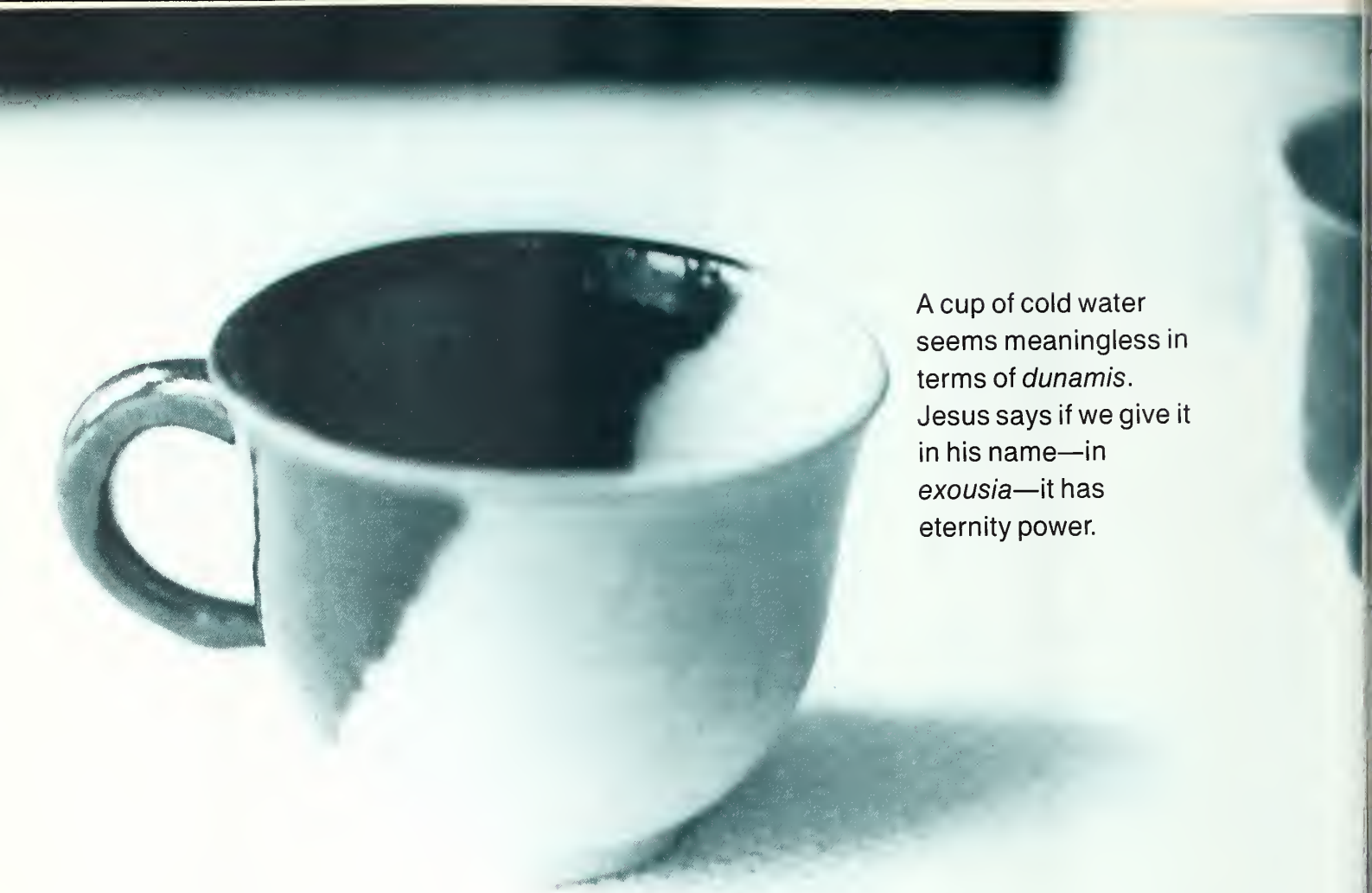

A cup of cold water seems meaningless in terms of *dunamis*. Jesus says if we give it in his name—in *exousia*—it has eternity power.

their religious faith and philosophy toward life. In fact, before a person could become the chief in some tribes he had to take a vow of non-violence. This vow was to be honored even in the situation in which a person entered the chief's teepee and began to kill members of his family. In such a case the chief was to not resist the murderer but invite him to smoke the peace pipe with him. The issue at stake for the tribe was that of authority. The person who could respond to his enemy in such a way obviously commanded great inner authority and thus could be trusted to be the leader for the group.

In discussing the idea of authority with a group of fellow church members, we came to the realization that there is no single area of our lives that is not or has not been subject to the power of dunamis. In our brief fellowship we had come to understand exousia and relate to each other as persons under its authority. But we were aware that the next morning would find us all back in the middle of a world under dunamis—a world that values credentials over inner quality, a world that listens more closely to the brash voices of society than to the quiet inner voice, a world primarily concerned about itself and at the same time susceptible to voices from without that ask for blind obedience.

In a world tainted by dunamis' power we do well to consider the lesson of the cross which teaches that through Christ's passion God defeated death. That defeat included the death power of dunamis.

When I was a boy my father and I stumbled upon a rattlesnake one day while walking in the Ozark hills. As soon as we heard the rattle and saw the snake at our feet poised for a strike, we charged up the hill away from the snake. Rattlesnakes command authority. Still, their authority is tentative. When we finally had enough courage to stop running and see if we had outrun the snake, we were chagrined to discover that the snake was wriggling in the opposite direction as fast as it could go.

Moments later it was still moving, having not yet mustered up the courage to stop and see if it had outrun us. Snakes—like bullets, like brute force, like might—command authority. But it is not an authority you would want to stake your life on. Underneath the strong veneer of dunamis is a dark, empty hole called death. It is reassuring to know that on the cross Jesus usurped the power of dunamis and exposed it for the sham it truly is. •

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# They renewed a broken commitment

*Karren Boehr*

Exhausted, she lay her head on the desk and took several deep breaths. The weariness of her body and the jumble of crippling emotions informed her that the weeks of struggle and anxiety were finally taking their ugly toll. Not even the decision she had made hours ago had brought the relief she was seeking.

"How about some lunch?"

The voice was all too familiar, the very sound she wanted obliterated—banned from the earth. Raising her head, she ran a careful finger through her already immaculate hair. "Aren't you miles away from work?" she asked flatly.

"I wanted to try that corner cafeteria you always used to rave about," he answered casually, then paused. "Besides, I think we need to talk."

Uninterested, she picked up a pile of correspondence and walked to a corner filing cabinet. "What's there to talk about?" she demanded.

"Well, for starters," he began, "we could discuss why those are sitting beside your desk." Lamely he pointed to several large brown leather suitcases.

"Sorry," she snapped, "but we've been through the facts a dozen times. Now all I want is for us to quit hurting each other and just go our separate ways. Consider the case closed."

For several seconds he stood motionless. A strong young man, he had made his way in the business world with hard work and a lot of natural charisma. Seldom did he encounter people with whom he could not reason. Yet today he found himself unable to budge the most pressing problem he had ever faced.

"Let's at least get a bite to eat," he finally offered placidly. "I did drive clear across town and I'm starved. How about it? The cafeteria is right around the corner."

"Okay," she finally relented, feeling guilty for being so unmoving. "How about the deli down the street?"

"That's three blocks away, and it's 30 below out there," he objected. "Sure that's what you want?"

"It's January 5," she flared, "and—"

"OK, OK," he interrupted, not wanting to add another argument to their already too-long list, "I forgot you would probably want to avoid eating there . . . the old man and all. . . ."

"That was a long time ago," she shot back curtly. Noticing his questioning eyes, she suddenly felt vulnerable, as if he could see the many weak bleeding spots beneath her new hardened exterior.

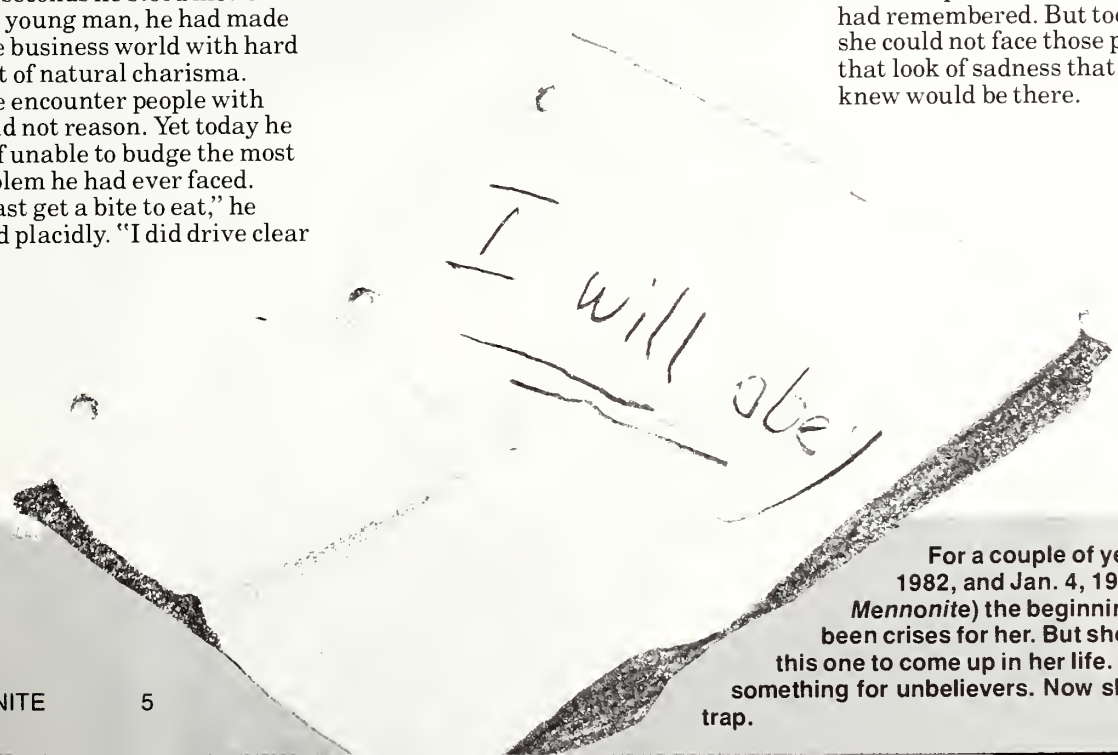
Forcefully locking her desk, she confidently strode the length of the room and grabbed her coat from a small closet. "The cafeteria it is," she said emphatically.

She had intended for her bold decision to convey to him that she no longer had qualms about anything but now, carefully placing a steaming bowl of chili on the small out-of-the-way table, she was not so sure. Brushing the watery snow from her shoulders, she shivered and prayed she would remain unnoticed among the sea of faces.

It had been five years since she had met the quaint and tattered gentlemen in this room, but his memory was seared into her mind like a flaming torch. She could still envision his battered hat tucked proudly beneath his weary arm and the baggy pants ragged from the constant beating of abrasive sidewalks.

Closing her eyes, she remembered how that day she had struggled with her New Year's resolution, desiring something special. And then he had appeared. Meekly he had asked to share the same table, then laid out the most pathetic of lunches. It was only after relating her dilemma in finding a meaningul commitment for the next 12 months that he had quietly lifted the pencil from her hand and, across the top of her yellow legal pad, written, "I WILL OBEY." She had wanted to witness to him about her God, but it was he who had known what the Christian life was all about. The whole incident had dramatically changed her life.

There were times when she longed to see his face again, to check his hands to see if the palms were as scarred as she had remembered. But today she knew she could not face those piercing eyes, that look of sadness that she somehow knew would be there.




**For a couple of years now (see Jan. 5, 1982, and Jan. 4, 1983, issues of *The Mennonite*) the beginning of a New Year had been crises for her. But she never expected this one to come up in her life. Divorce had been something for unbelievers. Now she felt caught in its trap.**

"You sure zoomed through the line," he remarked, unloading his tray. Quietly he bowed his head for a quick breath of grace and then reached in his pocket and withdrew a much worn piece of yellow paper. Unfolding it, he laid it gently in the center of the table. "I WILL OBEY" screamed from the page as if it were a siren.

"I found this on the floor this morning at three, would you believe, as I was trying to sort through a few things," he began. "It must have fallen out of your Bible. . . . That old man's message sure gets around." His voice faltered.

She glanced up from her soup with uncertain eyes, for the first time interested in what he had to say.

"Somehow I have the feeling a divorce isn't exactly heaven's idea of obedience," he ventured cautiously, his eyes careful not to meet hers. "Don't you think we owe it to our Father to at least try to put our lives back together?"

"It was a mistake," she answered unyielding. "We just missed it, that's all. First there was the car, then the argument about children . . . and now you've decided to change jobs and I don't want to move. I've worked hard to get where I am."

"I think we can work through the job situation," he returned hopefully. "When we got married a lot of prayer went into our decision. And that decision was made before God and all of heaven."

Several tears found their way across her nose and dived shamelessly into her soup. "But you agreed that it was best for us to close this chapter of our lives," she insisted.

"I know that's what I said," he answered, wiping the wetness from her cheeks with a long, strong finger. "But that was before I stumbled across this yellow piece of paper. Whoever said marriage would be easy? It isn't just a feeling. It's a commitment, a pledge to the other person that you will be a faithful, dedicated partner." He stopped and looked into her face that mirrored her desperation and confusion. "Last night, after hours of prayer, the Lord showed me that there is nothing in the wedding vows that says it's a 50-50 contract and that you are free when your rights are violated. Whether we realized it or not, you and I pledged to never stop giving."

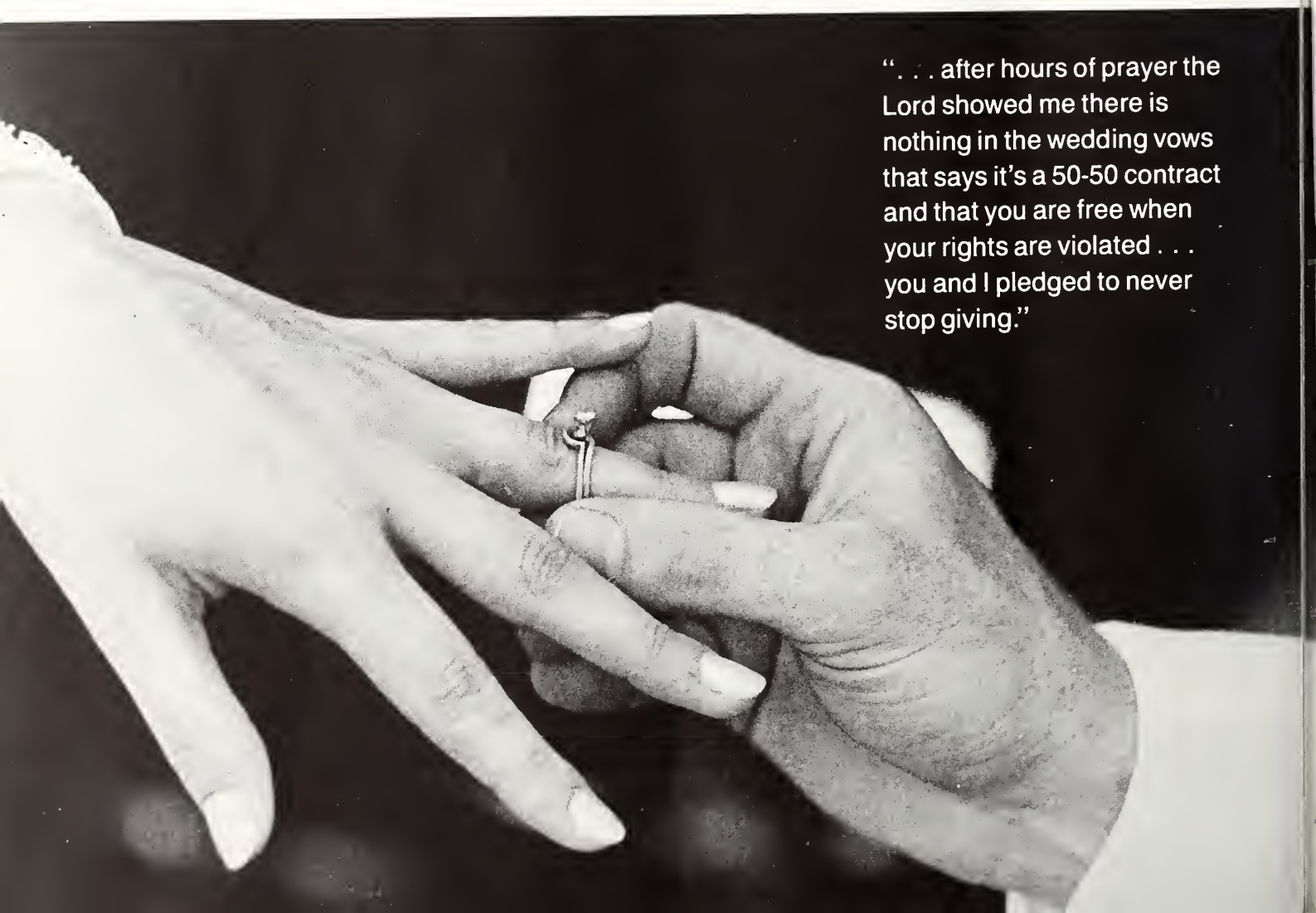
Why is the solution to all my problems forever the same? she thought, helplessly spooning through her soup like a nervous cat pacing the length of a cage. It never changes . . . always bowing my will to the voice of the Father.

"I don't know if I can go through the pruning it will take," she admitted honestly. "There is too much I need to face."

"Me too," he responded, "but God is on our side. If we jump ship now, we'll just find ourselves in one lifeboat after another, always on the run."

She paused, then wearily smiled as the burden she had been staggering under shifted into the heavenly realm. "Well," she blurted, relieved to allow the hard exterior to fall to the ground, "the Lord has never disappointed me yet, so why should he start now. I guess I'm coming home."

Blending with the many others hurrying back to waiting desks and appointments, only an older gentleman noticed their arm-in-arm departure. A gratifying look moved slowly across his age-etched face as he shuffled to his feet and reached for his tattered felt hat and dilapidated overcoat. Shoving his badly scarred hands into a pair of fleecy mittens, he knew once again his mission had been fulfilled; and it too had begun with obedience to the voice of the Father. •



". . . after hours of prayer the Lord showed me there is nothing in the wedding vows that says it's a 50-50 contract and that you are free when your rights are violated . . . you and I pledged to never stop giving."

# David looks back on his life

*Byron Weber-Becker*

Many people have a wrong picture of my fight with Goliath. They remember it as a child's story about a boy with a slingshot who fights a giant.

From the Israelite perspective, the whole affair was due to Philistine aggression. For about 150 years they had been expanding their territory. Aside from Samson there was unsuccessful resistance from the Israelites and the other surrounding peoples. This Philistine aggression was climaxed with our defeat at Ebenezer, where the Philistines killed about 30,000 Israelites and captured the Ark of the Covenant.

Twenty years later, Samuel pleaded with God for help to drive out the Philistines. We broke with tradition and asked for a king. But we didn't feel secure, although Saul did push the Philistines further back.

But then the Philistines again tried to expand their territory. We had done nothing to provoke them, so it was their aggression. They marched right into our territory, to Socoh—within the boundaries of Judah.

Both armies lined up and were about ready to start fighting. Then Goliath—a Philistine—stepped away from his ranks and shouted, "Why are you lining up for battle? Choose a man to come fight me. If he kills me, we will be your slaves; but if I kill him, you shall become our slaves." Three of my brothers who were there said the whole Israelite army was afraid at the thought of single combat with Goliath. So the two armies just looked at each other and shook their fists for about 40 days. Goliath shouted his challenge every morning and evening.

One day, when bringing some food for my brothers, I heard Goliath. I asked why no one accepted his challenge, but I didn't get a straight answer.

I'm sure you know I grew up as a shepherd. One of my duties was to defend our flock from bears and lions. Once while fighting a lion, he nearly got the best of me, and I'm convinced he would have if God had not been fighting with me. When I told my father, he said the Israelites have a long tradition of relying on God to fight with them. But then Dad pushed it one step further; most of the time God fights for us.

That threw me for a loop. I'd never seen God whack off the head of a Philistine. But the more I thought about it, the more sense it made. Take the Exodus. My people had left Egypt when Pharaoh changed his mind. Backed up against the Red Sea, Pharaoh came charging after them with 600 of his best charioteers. When Moses raised his arm, the Red Sea parted and my people made their escape.

*And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace. . . . The Lord be between thee and me" (1 Samuel 20:42).*

Remember Gideon? God worked through him to solve a problem with the Midianites. Gideon knew the Midianites had a good army, so he raised as big an army as he could to help God do the fighting. But God said, "There are too many people with you for me to fight Midian; Israel might claim the credit for themselves at my expense."

When Gideon told everyone who was afraid to pack up and go home, 22,000 of his 32,000 fighting men left. There were 135,000 Midianite militia.

God said there were still too many soldiers. At a stream, those who drank by cupping their hands stayed in the army, and those who knelt down and lapped up the water were told to go home. Now only 300 remained. God fought for the army, giving them victory over the Midianites.

This history that my father told me was the difference between my approach to Goliath and that of the Israelite army. I knew God would fight for me. Everyone else in our army thought it would be just Goliath and himself. That thought of aloneness, of everything resting on one person's skill and courage, can be really scary.

I was still a part of the process: I had to volunteer to be God's instrument. I chose the stones and I hurled the sling, but God guided the stone to the precise spot where Goliath was vulnerable.

I've come to realize that my approach toward Goliath—to let God do the fighting—is much easier to do from the position of an underdog. Once I acquired my own army, it was nearly impossible to rely on God instead of my men.

I thought I could reinvent an army so that God would be an integral part of it and we would rely on him. But I started relying on my own strength and that of my men. I now know the wars that resulted were outside God's plan.

My punishment came later when I wanted to build a temple for God. I began gathering all kinds of material for it—cedars from Lebanon, gold, silver and bronze. But then God said to me, "You have shed much blood and fought great battles; it is not for you to build a house for my name, since you have shed so much blood on the earth in my presence. But your son shall be a man of peace, and he shall build a house for my name."

I was disappointed that I was not permitted to build God's temple.

Despite my good intentions, I had to learn my lesson the hard way. I certainly hope you and your generation can learn from my experience and can live up to living God's expectations better than I did.

*Byron Weber-Becker lives at 1013 S. 11th St., Goshen, IN 46526. His article is based on a meditation shared in church.*

# My first and last casino experience

*Sara Harder*

"Never!" I would have said a year ago.

But recently I did enter a first-class casino, and that during a Mennonite tour. Yes, the bus driver handed each of us tourists on his bus a roll of genuine quarters—$10 worth. In that way we could have fun in a casino without gambling away our own money.

And so we entered.

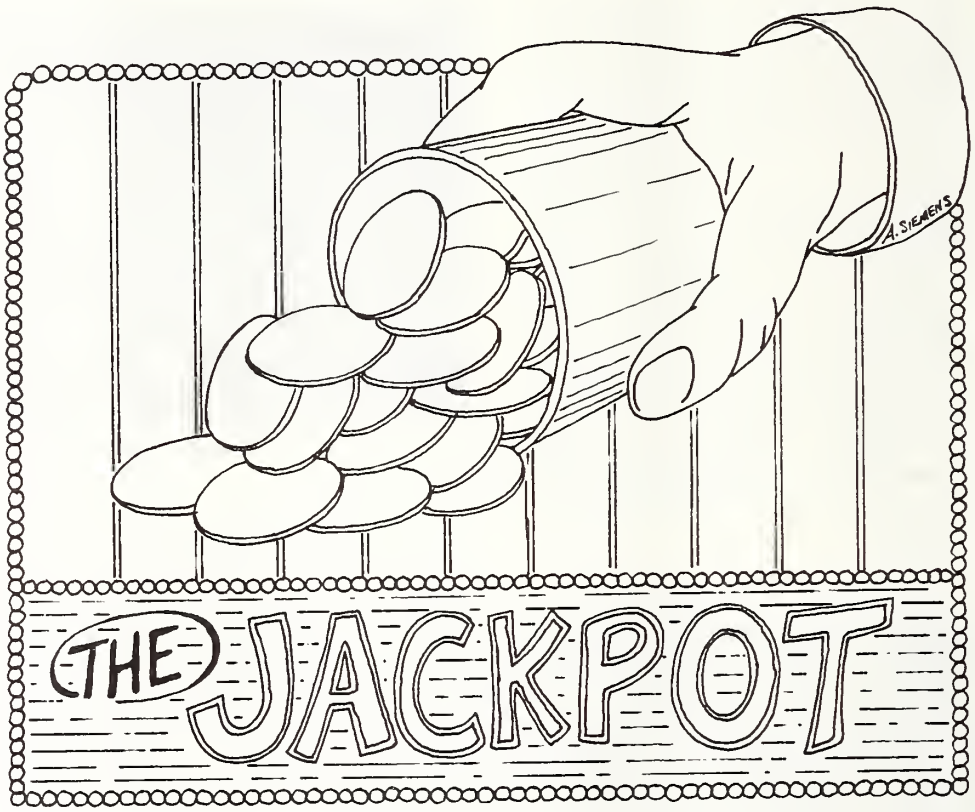
Glitter and music and the clatter of slot machines welcomed us. The ceiling was made of mirrors so we could see ourselves walk upside down. Lights like those from brilliant chandeliers and enticing colors of red and black seemed to surround us until we entered the great, darkened room with seemingly miles of slot machines.

Yes, right near the entrance were vacant slot machines easy to handle, much like the machines where you deposit a quarter and get a chocolate bar or a sandwich. This time you just deposited a quarter, pulled a lever and a small computer screen announced, "Deposit accepted."

I tried one quarter, and the next, and the next, always with the same response. Well, I thought, I must read the instructions more carefully. Something should happen. I found out that you could deposit five quarters before pulling the lever. I did that. And then it happened. Quarters began dropping out at the bottom of the machine and into a tray. On the screen the figures came filing in: . . . 200, 201, 202. . . . I couldn't stop the quarters nor the numbers; they just kept coming and coming. It literally rained quarters into that tray. At last the screen announced 250, and that was the end.

Now, what was I to do with those heaps of quarters? I noticed big paper cups stacked beside the machine, seemingly waiting to be used. So I scooped up the money and almost filled a cup. But what was I to do with that money? It weighed heavy in my hands. I quickly used up the rest of that roll of quarters which had been handed to me earlier. Of course nothing more happened except, "Deposit accepted."

At least I had rid myself of that. But now, what about this cupfull? Treat my fellow tourists to a good meal? Give it to MCC? I felt this was simply not my money. It was no honest earning fit for a gift. How could I expect blessing on it?




*Can God bless money you or I might win at a casino?*

My sister showed me the way. She simply placed her cup on the desk of the receptionist and made it clear to her that she was returning this money; she did not want to keep it. I placed my cup right beside hers. The clerk could not believe her eyes when she saw that someone would return money in a casino.

But we left the place, just a bit wiser in the ways of the world. And that was perhaps the purpose of including the casino on our Mennonite tour after traveling through the most "unworldly" Amish country. How cleverly the casino managers draw in the most disinterested people. First they give you that roll of quarters. You don't have to risk your own money to start with. But how quickly you could be enticed to use your own too. If you can win $60 in one shot, couldn't you win $600 or even $6,000 if you risked a little more of your own?

And so the casino people draw in busload after busload of senior citizens. Each passenger is handed a roll of quarters, and probably the bus driver is handed a pretty good bonus for bringing the bus in. And what is the result?

You see rows and rows of people standing by those slot machines, their faces intently fixed on the screens. Yes, the machines are set so that the depositor wins a little at first, in order to be encouraged to risk more. Usually he or she loses more. We heard of a man who had come into the city with a $9,000 car. No doubt he hoped to win a fortune in the casino. But what happened? He lost all his cash, then gave his car into a pound for $8,000 and lost that too.

There was no report on the hundreds of senior citizens who risk their precious life savings in the gambling hall in hopes of winning a fortune but instead come away broke, broken and desolate.

*Sara Harder, 9103 Hazel St. S., Chilliwack, BC V2P 5N5, was part of a post-Bethlehem '83 tour which included a stop at Atlantic City.*

# The LCC met in Clearbrook

*Peter Sawatzky*

We heard of the WCC meeting in Vancouver challenging us to work for justice and peace between nations. We heard about Bethlehem '83 celebrating the 300th anniversary of the arrival of the first Mennonites in North America. They too were concerned with peace and justice in the lives of people, especially in their own lives.

You may even have heard of the Lao Conference of Churches meeting in Clearbrook. But what do the first two have in common with the last one? The first two took note of the latter—unofficially that is.

The LCC meeting in Clearbrook addressed the justice and peace question as it relates to God and people, in particular the displaced people of Laos in the United States and in Canada.

It was a regular Sunday afternoon service for Laotians in the Central Fraser Valley. Several conference guests had joined us for the service. We were anticipating great things, and we were not to be disappointed. As we listened to the tunes and followed the words, we felt the mood growing even before the second annual meeting of the LCC in the United States and Canada began.

*"We are one in the bond of love,*
*We are one in the bond of love.*
*We have joined our spirit*
*with the Spirit of God.*
*We are one in the bond of love.*
*Let us sing now every one,*
*Let us feel his love begun.*
*Let us join our hands*
*that the world may know,*
*we are one in the bond of love."*

I was overwhelmed. For indeed we had "joined our spirits with the Spirit of God" as we worshiped him.

This song became our theme song. It set the mood for the entire conference and reflected the two main issues facing the pastors: (1) Oneness in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16), which was the conference theme; (2) "That the world may know we are one in the bond of love."

The world of their Laotian communities in the United States and in Canada was uppermost on the minds of the pastors. How do the mostly small Lao Christian fellowships appear to the socially uprooted immigrants from Laos? Can they take their message seriously? The gospel sounds credible but their financial and human resources are less than convincing. By contrast, the sponsoring churches appear more appealing and offer a greater measure of stability. At present a number of immigrants are prepared to opt for membership in a sponsor church, if possible, even at the expense of not being able to hear the gospel and respond to it in their own language and cultural context.

A third option to many immigrants is the mostly self-initiated associations which attempt to serve the social and cultural needs of many immigrants but do not constantly challenge members to forsake their former ways—morally speaking.

How relevant are the Lao fellowships and the gospel they proclaim to the Laotian immigrant? In the final analysis the leaders found themselves struggling with the fundamental issues of identity, purpose and mission.

After the formal Sunday evening opening, the conference launched into five days of hard work. Non-Laotian resource people included the pastor of the hosting church, General Conference president Jake Tilitzky and several other members from the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia.

In his message to the conference, Jake Tilitzky challenged us to turn *around*, to turn *off* that which is not within God's will, to turn *toward* those things pleasing to God and to turn *on* for Jesus.

The daily schedule included morning devotions followed by several morning and afternoon sessions. Morning sessions were set aside for a discussion of para-Christian groups, Christian doctrine and the use of resources available to pastors. In two of the sessions the pastors were also introduced to Mennonites and the relief work of Mennonite Central Committee.

*From left to right: Chanthone Rounthapanga, president of LCC; Mike Phrasavath, vice president; Tong Chichalerntham, vice president; Sylang Kaneboodtra, treasurer; Praseuth Douangmala, assistant general secretary.*

*The LCC executive is united in a resolve to reach out among their own people in the United States and Canada.*

In the afternoon sessions, pastors reported on the work done in their own churches and communities. They talked about issues such as caring for the old and the young in their churches, the Lao churches and the Lao associations, the translation of the Bible, church planting, stewardship, and supporting one another as members of the LCC.

Evenings were set aside for home visitations and revival meetings. Many of the 70 homes in the valley were visited, and all were invited to the revival services on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The responses were reassuring and gave reason for much rejoicing and praise.

This conference gave the hosting Laotian fellowship the mountaintop experience we had been praying for. The view from above is definitely different, and it enhanced the vision of the leaders.

The conference opened on Sunday, July 24, ended on Friday, July 29, 1983. It is history now. The 22 leaders returned to Ontario, Texas, Iowa, Alberta, California, Hawaii and Vancouver, strengthened and reassured that "they are one in the bond of love."

The infant LCC will continue to look for affirmation and support from fellow Christians. And what will we do?

The LCC boat is small, the journey long and treacherous. Can we stand by idly? We helped before when their supplies ran low and many were lost off distant shores. Will we reach out again now that they are uprooted, insecure and drifting in our own neighborhoods, literally within shouting distance?

And how will we reach out? Grudgingly, selfishly, caringly, lovingly?

The Loation family in the block, the pastor, the fellowship with its modest membership, and the LCC all need our love and affirmation deeply rooted in Christian commitment.

*Peter Sawatzky, 2883 Princess St., Clearbrook, BC V2T 2S7, is a high school teacher and a member of the Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church.*

**In the largest one-day expenditure** since the Vietnam War, the Pentagon spent $4.2 billion on Oct. 2, 1983, so it would not have money left over at the end of the fiscal year. To avoid having to return any part of its appropriation to the Treasury Department, the Pentagon awarded 234 contracts on that day. The largest single contract went to Honeywell, a $450 million order for weapons. The Defense Department is in the midst of a five-year, $1.7 trillion buildup, a record spending plan for peacetime.

**President Reagan** has captured the coveted Doublespeak Award given annually by the National Council of Teachers of English. The council's committee on public doublespeak chose Reagan, UPI reported, after he named the MX missile the "peacekeeper." He was cited a second time for his declaration that "a vote against MX production today is a vote against arms control tomorrow." William Lutz, who chairs the committee, said the award is "an ironic tribute to American public figures who have perpetrated language that is grossly deceptive, evasive, euphemistic, confusing or self-contradictory."

# NEWS

## Spanish Anabaptist curriculum project making steady progress

St. Paul, Minn.—The Congregational Anabaptist Education Spanish Curriculum project took a historic step at its board of directors meeting, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Oct. 13-16, 1983, with the delivery of the text for the first 17 lesson plans.

Hector Valencia, executive director, proudly turned the documents over to Jose Matamoros, a graphic artist retained by the project to do the layout and graphic design in preparation for delivery to the printer. The 17 lessons will produce two books and are the first in a series of 210 lessons to be printed in 18 books over a 3½-year period.

Based on an outline of the Foundation Series, with some additions, the project utilized over 30 Latin American writers under the supervision of three regional editors to produce Spanish Anabaptist materials by Latins for Latins. With a proposed four-year budget of $196,000, this project is the first major inter-Latin Mennonite printing project in Latin America.

*Jose Matamoros (left) receives the text for the first Spanish Anabaptist Sunday school lessons from Hector Valencia.*

The Hispanic ministries department of the General Conference contributed $3,000 in 1982 and $4,000 in 1983 to this project. It is projected that similar or increased contributions will be made in 1984. Twelve funding sources from countries are contributing to the project, with the Council of International Ministries matching the funds raised by the Latin American National Conferences.

In addition to serving as the point of delivery for the first lessons, the CAEBC board of directors also took a bold new step by authorizing the initial steps for the formation of an inter-Mennonite, interconference, Latin American, non-profit corporation or publishing house. At its December 1982 meeting in Costa Rica, the board formed an organizational commission to explore projects for future development. *Alberto Quintela*

## Resource persons for leadership/authority sessions

Winnipeg (CMC)—The resource persons for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada study conference on leadership and authority have been named.

The study session, which will be held at Canadian Mennonite Bible College Jan. 29-31, will make six major presentations. Ample time will be allowed for plenary discussion and small working groups.

Bernie Wiebe, editor of *The Mennonite*, will help set the stage for the discussions by highlighting some of the key authority issues currently facing the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. He has polled a number of people across Canada to get their feedback on what they view as the most pressing questions related to the study conference's theme, "Authority and the Church."

Another Sunday evening presentation will be made by Lydia Harder of Edmonton, a graduate student in theology. Her assigned topic is "Authority, Truth and the Church."

On Monday there will be three presentations. Waldemar Janzen and Dave Schroeder of the CMBC faculty will team up for a presentation entitled "Biblical Perspectives on Authority." In the afternoon another CMBC teacher, John Friesen, will speak on "Authority in Anabaptist Perspective." Calvin Redekop's topic that evening will be "Social Dynamics Today and the Question of Authority." Redekop teaches at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont.

The windup speaker will be J. Lawrence Burkholder, president of Goshen (Ind.) College.

Other resource persons will include members of a reference committee consisting of Gayle Gerber Koontz of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries faculty, Elkhart, Ind.; Rodney J. Sawatsky of Conrad Grebel College, whose paper on "Autonomy and Accountability" at last summer's CMC sessions helped trigger this study conference; and John H. Neufeld, Winnipeg, president-elect of CMBC.

The study conference is open to leaders from congregations and conferences and to all interested people. It will not be a decision-making conference, although recommendations may be brought from it to the the CMC annual sessions in July.

**Cheyenne and Mennonites** share many similarities, according to Lawrence Hart, a leader in both groups. The head of the Cheyenne Cultural Center of Clinton, Okla., Hart spoke at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., Nov. 21, 1983, on "The Cheyenne Peace Tradition." Hart, who is a member of the council of 44 "peace chiefs" who govern the Cheyenne tribe, told of several 19th-century chiefs who refused to retaliate when attacked by U.S. troops. Hart sees Cheyenne and Mennonites as "minorities within minorities." They also share a history of having been "driven and persecuted," and each group sees itself as a people, he said.

**A recent editorial** in the *Dene Nation Newsletter* reveals growing Dene discontent with the proposed cruise missile testing in Canada's North, according to Menno Wiebe, Mennonite Central Committee Canada Native Concerns director. The editorial, by Cindy Gilday, says that Denendeh land claimed by the Dene people in the Northwest Territories' Mackenzie Basin "will be used to test cruise missiles without Dene knowledge or consent." She goes on to express opposition to government plans for disposal of nuclear wastes in the North. "The use of nuclear power," she says, "is contrary to the beliefs and values of the Dene."

**A canned food drive** was sponsored by Bluffton (Ohio) College's athletic department Dec. 14, 1983. Anyone bringing a canned or other non-perishable food item to the Bluffton-Mt. Vernon men's basketball game did not have to pay an admission charge. The collected food was then distributed to area needy families during the holiday season.

# Hefty January income needed for General Conference budget

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—With little more than a month remaining in fiscal year 1983, giving to General Conference causes was $1,362,018 short of the goal, requiring a bigger-than-usual surge in contributions in January if the budget is to be met.

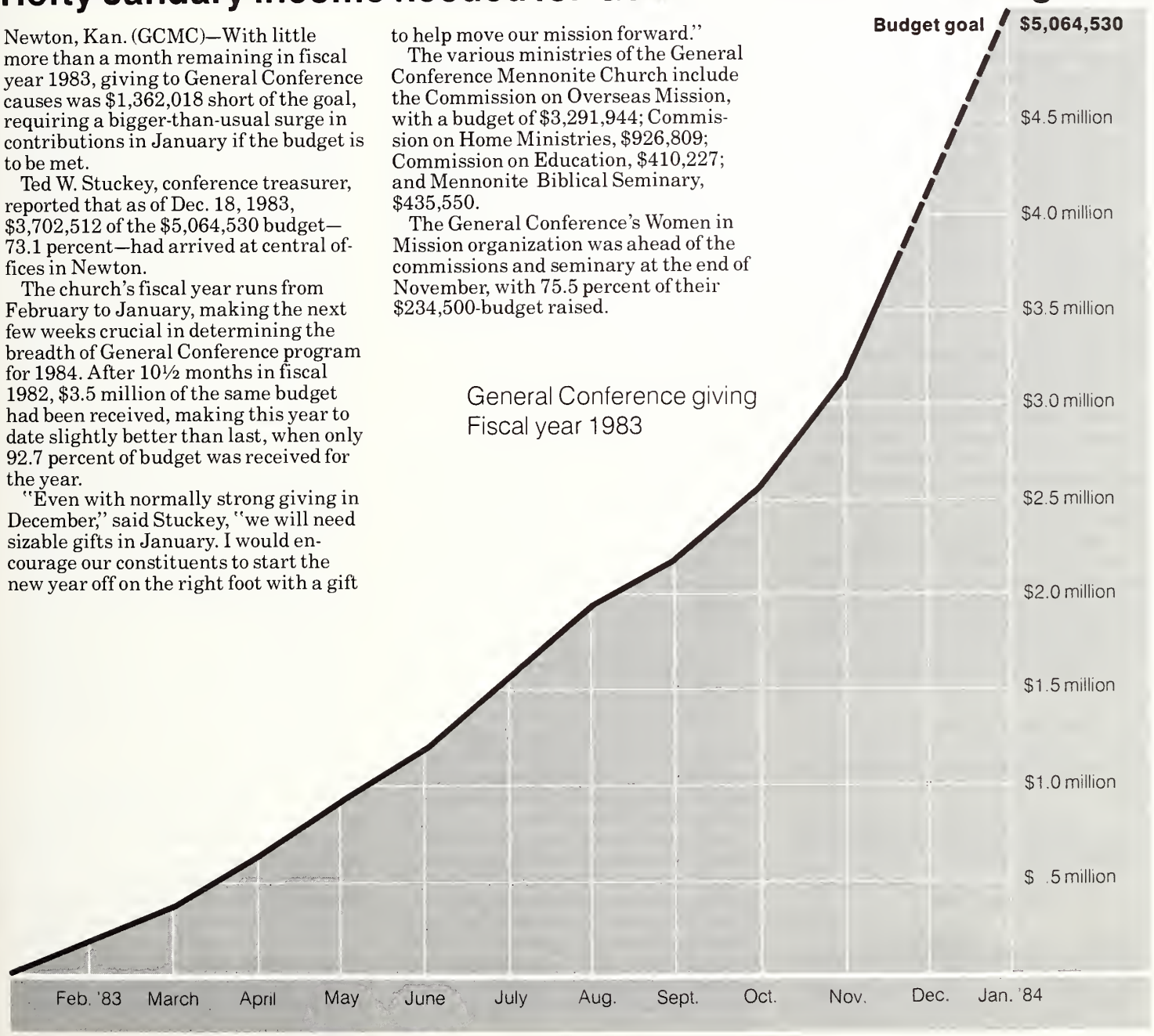
Ted W. Stuckey, conference treasurer, reported that as of Dec. 18, 1983, $3,702,512 of the $5,064,530 budget—73.1 percent—had arrived at central offices in Newton.

The church's fiscal year runs from February to January, making the next few weeks crucial in determining the breadth of General Conference program for 1984. After 10½ months in fiscal 1982, $3.5 million of the same budget had been received, making this year to date slightly better than last, when only 92.7 percent of budget was received for the year.

"Even with normally strong giving in December," said Stuckey, "we will need sizable gifts in January. I would encourage our constituents to start the new year off on the right foot with a gift to help move our mission forward."

The various ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church include the Commission on Overseas Mission, with a budget of $3,291,944; Commission on Home Ministries, $926,809; Commission on Education, $410,227; and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, $435,550.

The General Conference's Women in Mission organization was ahead of the commissions and seminary at the end of November, with 75.5 percent of their $234,500-budget raised.



**The National Council of Churches,** holding a meeting in Hartford, Conn., voted 116-94 to postpone action indefinitely on a proposal declaring the 27,000-member Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches eligible for membership. The UFMCC was formed primarily for homosexuals.

**James Armstrong,** president of the National Council of Churches and United Methodist bishop for the state of Indiana, announced his immediate resignation from both posts Nov. 15, 1983. In a brief statement, he said that since assuming them, "I have submitted myself to an exhausting and inhuman work schedule and because of this have failed many persons as well as the gospel. . . . I am not here renouncing the message I have preached. I am confessing that I have failed my family and other loved ones, as well as myself. I am now physically and emotionally depleted."

**"Faith and the Future of Aging"** was the theme of the 12th annual meeting of the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging in Indianapolis Nov. 6-9, 1983. NICA is a coalition of religious bodies and affiliated agencies which addresses the spiritual well-being of older people. The function of the coalition is to broker teamwork and linkages among the member bodies. Martha Graber, program director of the Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, attended the meeting. She also attended the sixth national Widowed Persons Service conference on the theme "Permission to Grow" in Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 30-Nov. 1, 1983.

## New church forms in Ontario

Windsor, Ont. (GCMC)—A new Mennonite church had its first service Nov. 27, 1983, in Windsor, Ont., at the Trinity United Church. Starting such a group has been in progress for a number of years. Local Mennonite churches and the Conference of United Mennonite Churches of Ontario were directly involved.

Some years ago the provincial conference's missions and service committee asked Henry Paetkau to spearhead the effort. Harrow United Mennonite Church, where he is pastor, freed him to work one-fifth time in Windsor. The provincial and Canadian conferences paid that part of his salary.

Paetkau started a Bible study group, which had been tried earlier. It met for 1½ years but did not develop into a church group. He involved area Mennonite congregations for decision making and financial support.

Gradually, interested people in Windsor and beyond became a core church group. Early in October 1983 the supporting churches and the missions and service committee gave the go-ahead. Paetkau sent out letters and made contacts about initiating services.

Once started, the weekly worship services averaged around 30 people. Participants are mainly Mennonites, including students from the University of Windsor.

"We're hoping to find someone to work half time in this ministry," Paetkau said. "This would allow the group to meet Sunday morning."


## Business manager - fund raiser

**Swift Current Bible Institute** is receivinng applications for the position of business manager-fund raiser.

Person must have bookkeeping experiences and be skilled in public relations.

Position available **May 1, 1984.**

Apply to:
David Ortis, principal
Swift Current Bible Institute
Box 1268
Swift Current, SK S9H 3X4.


## *Canadian religious broadcasting still up in the air*

Toronto (EP)—Canada's major churches and religious groups are pondering the perils of national broadcasting and checking their budgets for spare millions. At issue is nothing less than the shape of religious broadcasting in Canada for years to come.

Last June, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission called for applications for a national religious broadcasting license. The interfaith service, to be beamed from a satellite and picked up for distribution by local cable companies, must be comprehensive, Canadian, and owned and managed by an organization "broadly representative of religious groups in Canada," CRTC said. Applicants had until Sept. 2, 1983, to file a bid and raise at least 250,000 Canadian dollars for the inevitable hearings.

The hybrid licensee envisioned by the CRTC is slowly evolving, but now has until Jan. 3 to emerge full-blown, ready to spend up to 7 million Canadian dollars getting on the air and almost as much annually to stay there.

The main players to date are: Interchurch Communication (ICC), a coalition of Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and United Churches; Crossroads Christian Communication, Inc., producers of 100 Huntley Street and Canada's most experienced religious broadcasting organization; and the Rosewell Group, affiliated with ICC.

## Teachers meet in Saskatchewan

Winnipeg (CAMS)—The Bethany Bible Institute, Hepburn, Sask., was the site of the third biennial Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools teachers' convention. A total of 150 teachers and administrators from 15 Mennonite schools from elementary to post secondary participated in the Nov. 11-14 convention. They came from as far away as Waterloo, Ont., and Clearbrook, B.C.

The main feature of the convention was a set of four workshops for teachers dealing with Anabaptism and the curriculum, creative teaching and ethics, evangelism and communication skills. The workshops were an occasion for the sharing of ideas and concerns about private school education by teachers from various settings.

The keynote addresses by Ken Davis, dean of Trinity Western College in British Columbia, stimulated a lot of discussion by his treatment of the topic "Preparing Students for a Changing World." His key concept was that secular humanism (never clearly defined) pervades our political, cultural and even our religious life. He saw humanism particularly evident in the World Council of Churches.

A question near the end of the convention characterized the uneasiness that many felt when someone asked how one could speak for two hours about the state of the world and never make reference to the nuclear buildup and militarism. However, most participants agreed that Davis had raised vital concerns and had provoked a great deal of wholesome discussion.

For many, the highlight of the weekend was the closing fellowship evening that concluded with a communion service led by James Dunn, secretary of young adult education for the General Conference. Dunn led each day's devotions with a mixture of personal testimony, biblical exegesis and exhortation.

**The Tulang Bhawan (Indonesia) cattle project** was initiated by Mennonite Central Committee to help local farmers plow and cultivate the land on which they had recently settled—land that had never been cultivated. The Indonesian government relocated these farmers from the densely populated islands of Java and Bali to Sumatra, one of the country's less populated islands. These newcomers own little and can rarely obtain the cattle they need to cultivate land. The farmers formed a cooperative to aid in the distribution and use of cattle supplied by MCC.

**It began as a bubbling vat** over wood fires in a courtyard in Saidpur, Bangladesh—an experiment to determine whether laundry soap could be produced locally. The experiment was a success. Now six employees produce about 2,700 pounds of low-cost, good quality laundry soap each month at the new Shapla Soap Factory. This factory is one of Mennonite Central Committee's 13 job creation projects in Bangladesh. It is the third project MCC Bangladesh has initiated to produce, within the country, material aid items that were earlier being imported from North America.

**Investigators have determined** that a fire which caused $40,000 in damage to an abortion clinic in Everett, Wash., was arson. The fire destroyed the clinic's medical equipment, causing a two- to four-week shutdown. The clinic has been the target of weekly pickets by anti-abortion groups since it opened last August.

# Sanitation improvements: not glamorous work, but necessary

Saidpur, Bangladesh (MCC)—In most areas of this town, flies live and breed in open sewers filled with black, foul water. Chickens peck through excreta and garbage looking for worms.

Dilapidated bucket latrines—sometimes emptied, sometimes overflowing—totter unobtrusively in yards and public places.

Yet in several areas of the town, Mennonite Central Committee, local masons and railway and municipal officials are helping residents replace the buckets and flies with sanitary disposal systems. Reports Don Schroeder, MCC worker from Columbia, S.C., "[1982 to 1983] was a good year for the Saidpur sanitation program."

This year the program consisted of building low-cost latrines, converting bucket latrines and installing drinking-water tubewells.

"Many hundreds, probably thousands, of people in Saidpur have no latrines," says Schroeder, who has coordinated the MCC sanitation program here since 1981. By July of this year, Schroeder and a handful of local masons had built simple, inexpensive latrines for 47 of these poor families. By using concrete rings instead of bricks to build the latrine pits, MCC was able to reduce the cost, he explains.

MCC requires those receiving the latrines to pay 50 percent of the cost in advance. Those who do not have the cash to pay the advance can receive six-month loans from the local municipality, Schroeder explains. "No one has totally defaulted yet," he adds, "though we've had to remind some people a lot."

*Mason in Bangladesh builds a low-cost latrine for a family in Saidpur.*

Schroeder, who is a sanitation engineer, also spent a good portion of 1982 to 1983 converting over 400 bucket latrines into sanitary pour-flush latrines. This is more than four times the number completed last year.

Saidpur has 6,000 to 7,000 bucket latrines, he notes. Most of these are unsanitary. And often the buckets of night-soil are dumped into a nearby drain or open sewer, rather than being disposed of properly, because the municipality does not have enough tractors or ox carts to haul all of the waste that is produced each day to the disposal area at the edge of town.

Converting a bucket latrine into a pour-flush pit latrine is fairly simple, Schroeder says. And these new "converted" latrines are more sanitary since the excreta has no contact with the outside air. People manually pour water into the commode to flush the excreta into the underground pit masons built behind the latrine, Schroeder explains.

Schroeder and his colleagues have also installed over 150 inexpensive, drinking-water pumps so that residents can drink unpolluted water. "We have seen that offering a safe latrine is not enough if people still have an unacceptable drinking water source," he says.

Most of the tubewells currently available here are large metal tubewells that sell for 1,000 to 1,200 takas ($40 to $49 U.S.). Many people cannot afford these tubewells so the MCC sanitation team developed a tubewell that costs about 500 takas ($20 U.S.).

Latrines and tubewells are not the only physical structures dotting the Saidpur landscape that have been improved by the MCC sanitation team. Schroeder and his colleagues have repaired or built approximately 3,300 feet of drains (open sewers). Often these drains were simply low-lying areas between homesites, he explains.

## Administrative position

Commission on Overseas Mission
Administrative position:
Secretary for mission communications
Starting summer 1984

Contact:
Erwin Rempel
COM
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114.

## Administrator needed

**Maison de l'Amitié de Montréal**, a Mennonite community center in downtown Montréal, requires an administrator for April 1984 or thereabouts. The center attempts to be a Christian presence in a multicultural, multilingual community.

The administrator bears overall responsibility for the various programs of the center and for developing programs to meet the changing needs of the impoverished and powerless of the inner city.

The position demands leadership and administrative abilities and a generous attitude to various expressions of Christianity and religion. French is the working language of the 10-member staff.

Apply to:
Harold Reesor, président
Maison de l'Amitié de Montréal
120 est avenue Duluth
Montréal, PQ H2W 1H1
Phone (514) 474-2547.

**The U.S. Supreme Court** said Dec. 5, 1983, that it will consider permanently reinstating a requirement that young men prove they registered for the draft when applying for federal college loans and grants. Acting on a Reagan administration appeal, the court agreed to review a ruling by a federal judge who said the law requiring disclosure of draft registration status was unconstitutional. The justices last reinstated the rule temporarily, and it is now in effect.

**The mission arm** of Indonesia's Muria Mennonite Church is forging ahead with church planting on three of the country's major islands. Although PIPKA (an Indonesian acronym of Proclaiming the Gospel and Serving in Love), along with other missions in the predominantly Muslim country, is prohibited from proselytization, churches are springing up spontaneously through simple proclamation and teaching. Among the Kantuk people of the Kalimantan region, government-permitted mission work means "teaching Christianity" in villages where the community together agrees to "study religion."

**Assembly Mennonite Church** in Goshen, Ind., observes its 10th anniversary this month. During the five Sundays of January the congregation will review its history and vision, consider its present life together and discern God's leading for the future. A special homecoming service is being held on Jan. 22 at the meetinghouse at 1201 South 11th Street from 9:30-11:45 a.m., to be followed by a fellowship meal. Former members and friends are invited. For more information write Ann Gingrich 24303 Francis Ave., Elkhart, IN 46514, telephone (219) 295-7709.

## Uganda: abandoning Western ideology, searching for its own

Kampala, Uganda (MCC)—The clock at the prestigious Mulago Hospital's eye-nose-throat clinic reads 4:56. On the tower of Makerere University's administration building the clock reads 12;20.

Above the main entrance to the high court in downtown Kampala it is 11:14. Inside the main post office it reads 12:27. All over Kampala clocks have stopped—at different times.

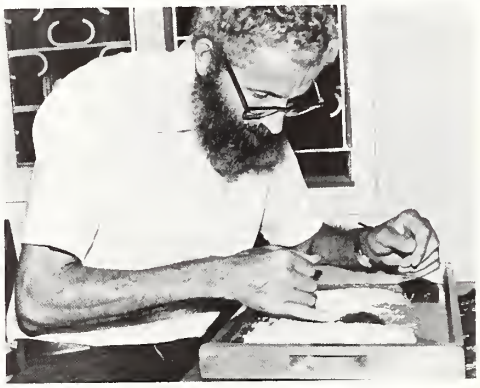
The clocks are Western mechanical or electrical devices. During the last 10 years they have broken down or worn out, and so far it has not been on anyone's priority list to get them fixed. The broken clocks are symbolic. "Clock" consciousness represents Western values. The broken clocks not only testify to their unimportance in the present system of values in Uganda, but also to the lack of spare parts.

Mulago Hospital, built by the British at the close of the colonial era, is a white elephant rather than a prestigious institution to many Ugandans. While walking through its wards I have noted at least six clocks, all stopped, all showing different times. But nobody complains.

If you need an injection the nurse swabs you with water, since their supply of alcohol ran out some time ago. But nobody complains—except for recently arrived Western doctors who are disturbed by the resulting skin infections at injection points. Ugandan staff members do not complain because the alcohol ran out when one of the clocks stopped.

There is no penicillin, but no one complains about that either, since that clock stopped some time ago. And when you do not have soap, water, bandages, cottonwool, toilet paper, bed linens or blankets, how can you complain about the lack of tetracycline?

Reports of people resorting to traditional medicine are on the increase. Academicians are debating among themselves what an appropriate African philosophy of sickness and healing might be. When the academicians have finished their debate, perhaps the clocks will be fixed; or perhaps they will be removed. Meanwhile, the hospitals are treating gunshot wounds and the effects of malnutrition. Measles has become the number one killer among children.



*Ens sorts through rice to remove rocks.*

Makerere University, once the best university by Western standards between Cairo and the Cape, remains the strongest national symbol of Western ideology. It is not the most visible symbol of Western ideology, nor the one affecting most people; that is still, unfortunately, the AK-47 and related weaponry. At Makerere many remain committed to Western academic ideals.

The university budget was drastically cut this year, but no howl of protest was heard from the administration. Its clock still reads 12:20. It takes two months to get a new light bulb installed in a classroom and four months to get enough seats, even backless benches, for students to be able to sit in class.

In the arts building everyone is expected to use the washroom marked "woman students." The washroom has a trickle of water about two-thirds of the time. The university, like most of society at large, is caught somewhere between two ideologies: flush toilets into which water is carried by jerry can; decreasing faculty ranks and increasing student numbers; people doing graduate studies in a library that has no current periodicals and virtually no book additions in over a decade; administrators driving their Mercedes on the sidewalk right up to the door of their office building; no paper available for faculty to prepare a class syllabus or duplicate faculty minutes.

The clocks have stopped at different times. The abandonment of Western ideology, a carry-over from colonial times, has halted at various points. It will take time to invent an ideology that can work in Uganda.

But the clocks are running in two places in Uganda. The solar-energized clock at the Wandegeya roundabout is running. The sun continues to shine despite all political and ideological upheaval. One segment of Uganda's economy that flourishes is solar-powered basic food production.

The clock in the SB supermarket is also running. The supermarket is operated by Asians, whose exile by Amin represented a rejection of their Western economic ideology. But the clock in the supermarket is an ironically anachronistic clock.

My colleague at the university earns 6,000 shillings a month. He could spend one-third of his monthly salary at the supermarket to buy one tin of British potato salad for 1,700 shillings. The SB supermarket clock, as well as the Mercedes of the VIP, is out of step with rest of the country.

Who will get the clocks in Uganda moving? Should they be started again? Will they ever be synchronized again unless they are on "sun" time? Which way is forward? *Adolf Ens*

**The annual pastors' workshop** at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., will be held Jan. 23-27 on the theme "Preaching in the Life of the Congregation." Resource persons include James Earl Massey, professor of New Testament and preaching at Anderson (Ind.) Graduate School of Theology, and Eleanor S. and Truman A. Morrison, extension professors in continuing education at Chicago Theological Seminary. For more information contact Mary Troyer, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, phone (219) 295-3726.

**Eventide** is a collection of ramshackle buildings located in the midst of sweltering heat, piles of rubble and the smell of vomit, soil and sweat in Kingston, Jamaica. Eventide is also home for 600 men, women and children who are mentally retarded or physically handicapped. This fall Mennonite Central Committee shipped bales of clothing, new sheets, bar soap, laundry soap, towels and 150 yards of rubber sheeting to Eventide. The Jamaica Mennonite Church has also been helping Eventide's residents. A local Mennonite self-help group called the Menno Green Project sewed clothing for the children there.

**Fifty years after the repeal of Prohibition** in the United States, a new movement is spreading throughout the world to drastically reduce alcohol consumption through government action—and attack what is increasingly recognized as one of the world's leading public health problems. Leaders of the new movement are likely at this point to be health professionals or scientists rather than preachers, who led the Prohibition movement earlier. They complain about getting little help from major church denominations.

# RECORD

## calendar

Jan. 20-21—MCC Canada annual meeting, Tofield, Alta.

Jan. 26-27—MCC U.S. annual meeting, Blaine, Wash.

Jan. 27-29—MCC annual meeting, Vancouver

Feb. 9-10—Mennonite Disaster Service annual meeting, Upland, Calif.

Feb. 16-19—Perspective '84, Minneapolis

March 2-6—Council of Commissions, Newton, Kan.

**Canada**

Jan. 29-31—CMC Conference on Church Polity, Winnipeg

Feb. 2-5—CMC Council of Boards, Winnipeg

Feb. 10-12—United Mennonite Churches of British Columbia, Chilliwack

Feb. 24-26—Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, Winnipeg

Feb. 24-26—Conference of the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario, Leamington

Feb. 24-26—Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan, Rosthern

March 9-11—Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Edmonton

## ministers

*Ed Balzer*, *Ken Godard* and *Linda Margaret Neufeld* were ordained to the ministry at Foothills Church, Calgary, on Nov. 6, 1983.

*John Krahn* was installed Nov. 20, 1983, as pastor at Carman Church, Winkler, Man.

*Donovan E. Smucker*, who has served as interim pastor at First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, will serve in a similar position at Lorraine Avenue Church, Wichita, Kan., beginning April 15.

*Smucker*

*Buller*

*Epps*

*Don Unger*, pastor at Hoffnungsfelder Church, Glenbush, Sask., was ordained Oct. 30, 1983.

## workers

*Larry Boldt*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa., working on the portable meat canner. He has a bachelor's degree in economics and business administration from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and has served in California and Colorado with Mennonite Disaster Service. His parents are Gustav and Marie Boldt of Reedley.

*Charles Buller*, overseas mission volunteer to Zaire under the Commission on Overseas Mission, returned to North America in October 1983 at the completion of a 2½-year term. He was involved in youth evangelism with the Kinshasa Mennonite churches and taught English at the Theological Institute of Kinshasa. Beginning this month, he plans to attend the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., to prepare for further service. His parents are COM missionaries Peter and Gladys Buller.

*Marvin* and *Audrey Dueck*, Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church and Crystal City (Man.) Church, respectively, have completed their first term of service as COM missionaries to Mexico. Marvin served as teacher at the Christliche Fortbildungsschule and Alvaro Obregon School in Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua. Audrey was both a homemaker and the mission treasurer. Marvin is presently studying at the University of Windsor (Ont.).

*Aaron* and *Betty Epp* returned in September 1983 to Goessel, Kan., after serving eight years in Mexico as COM missionaries. Aaron served as pastor of the Blumenau Mennonite Church in Cuauhtemoc, Chihuahua, doing visitation and leading Bible studies, while Betty assisted with church music, worked with women of the church and served as hostess at Casa Menno.

*Charles Fennig*, First Church, Berne, Ind., completed a two-year term in August 1983 as the first overseas mission volunteer serving in Zaire. His assignment included buying and expediting supplies for mission and church personnel in the interior and doing official business for church personnel. He is presently studying at the

*continued on next page*

**About 40 men and women** met at the Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg Nov. 19, 1983, to attend the first meeting of Healing and Edifying Lonely People. This new ministry is being formed by a group of widowed people to be a challenge and encouragement to the many people in this situation. Future meetings for the HELP ministry will be held the first Saturday of each month. Information is available from Justina Baerg at (204) 339-5974 or Margaret Peters at (204) 889-2834.

**In a sweeping action** against the government of South Africa, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation prohibiting new investment in the country, halting transfer of nuclear technology there and requiring corporations already doing business in the country to comply with principles on corporate hiring, integration and other workplace practices. Representative William Gray (D-Pa.), a co-sponsor of the legislation, said the vote marked the first time ever that the House has "taken such direct action" against "the inequities in the political, social and economic life of South Africa."

**Jesus weeping over the city** was the striking image used by Joe Trull, pastor of the First Baptist Church of El Paso, Texas, to open an Urban Pastors Training Seminar held Oct. 31-Nov. 4, 1983, in El Paso. "We must reach the cities with the gospel or we will lose this generation," Trull told the group of urban workers and ministers from the Rocky Mountain Conference and the Western District of the General Conference. He said that the need for nurture gives the church an opportunity for outreach in an urban culture that often emphasizes self-fulfillment and individual autonomy.

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Summer Institute of Linguistics in Dallas, preparing for further overseas service.

*Allan Friesen*, Tiefengrund Church, Laird, Sask., has begun a one-year assignment in Paraguay as an agricultural worker under MCC's SALT International program. SALT stands for Serve and Learn Together and is a short-term MCC assignment for young people ages 18-22. His parents are Wilmer and Ruth Friesen of Laird.

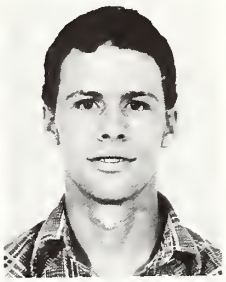
*Roy Goering*, Eden Church, Moundridge, Kan., has begun a two-year MCC voluntary aid program. Roy last worked in Hutchinson, Kan., with Mennonite Voluntary Service as a chaplain's assistant at Kansas State Industrial Reformatory and as an assistant to the activities director at Golden Plains Convalescent Center. His parents are Homer and Dorothy Goering of Moundridge.

*Doug* and *Dawn Yoder Harms*, Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.), have begun three-year terms with MCC in Angola working in community development. Doug last worked as a carpenter, while Dawn was a student pastor. He has a bachelor's degree in biology and environmental studies from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. She has a bachelor's degree in music education from Goshen (Ind.) College. They received certificates of theology from AMBS in Elkhart, Ind. His parents are Paul and Shirley Harms of Upland, Calif., and hers are Thomas and Hazel Yoder of Normal.

*Ellwyn* and *Ruth Hartzler*, Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio, have begun five-month voluntary service assignments with the MCC SELFHELP program.

*Art* and *Marge Hildebrand*, Crystal City (Man.) Church, have begun assignments of two years and eight months with MCC in Jerusalem and the West Bank as associate country representatives. He has a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Manitoba, where she studied education. She has a bachelor's degree in math from the University of Winnipeg. He has a master's degree in peace studies from AMBS. His parents are Peter and Mary Hildebrand of Crystal City; hers are John and Dorothy Reimer of Mound, Man.

*Fennig*



*Friesen*

*Hildebrands*

*Harms*

*Kehlers*

*Carole Jantzen*, Eigenheim Church, Rosthern, Sask., will work for one year in a leprosy mission in Paraguay with MCC's SALT International program. Her parents are Robert and Irene Jantzen of Rosthern.

*Dennis* and *Esther Kehler*, Faith Church, Newton, Kan., and Hamilton (Ont.) Church, respectively, have begun three-year terms with MCC in Somalia. He will work in appropriate technology, and she will be a public health and nutrition worker. Esther has a bachelor's degree in health studies from the University of Waterloo (Ont.). Dennis has a bachelor's degree in industrial arts from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He also attended the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Burnaby. Her parents are Albert and Betty Willms of Hamilton; his are Peter and Sue Kehler of Newton.

*John* and *Leona Krause*, Olivet Church, Clearbrook, B.C., have served as missionaries to Zaire since 1978 under COM and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, first as houseparents and the last two years as administrative assistants in Kinshasa. Their work included

**The New York City Mennonite Peace Center** was first proposed in March 1980. In November 1981 Sylvia Horst began a one-year voluntary service assignment to establish the center. Funding for the program for 1982 was contributed by the peace and social concerns commission of Lancaster Conference, while the NYC Mennonite Council donated office space. The 1983 budget of $7,800 provided for a half-time staff person and program expenses. The budget for 1984 is $7,930.

# RECORD

*Jantzen*

*Remple*

*Krauses*

purchasing, travel arrangements, bookkeeping and hosting guests. They completed their term and returned in September 1983 to seek further employment.

*Byron Remple*, Foothills Church, Calgary, has begun a one-year term in Indonesia and Thailand under MCC's SALT International program. He has a Bible school diploma from Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C. His parents are Peter and Norma Remple of Calgary.

*Howard Zacharias* has been named staff geriatrician at Eden Mental Health Centre, Winkler, Man. Much of his work will consist of consultation. He will also continue as assistant professor at the University of Manitoba Medical College.

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## What does God want from his people?

The prophet Micah proclaimed, "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God" (Micah 6:8).

True religion is not a mere outward conformity to a prescribed ritual nor the bringing of sacrifices, but a life lived in accord with the divine principles of righteousness.

Jesus articulated these same principles in one of his sermons. "You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23).

God's message for us in 1984 is an encouragement not to neglect the more important matters. We need to practice justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God.

## Meet John W. Sprunger (J. W.),

COE executive secretary. As executive secretary J. W. serves as administrator for the programs which seek to fulfill COE's goals for the '80s. The goals are (1) to increase biblical understanding, (2) to strengthen families, (3) to strengthen church community, and (4) to develop more effective disciples. J. W. began his responsibilities with COE in August 1983.

## General Conference Giving Thermometer-1983

$5,064,530 goal by Jan. 31, 1984

$3,702,512 received by Dec. 18, 1983

COE invites your continued support of the total General Conference Program. The 1983 budget year ends Jan. 31.

Your continued strong giving will help:

**Commission on Education** employ full-time staff in adult and children's education

**Commission on Home Ministries** say "yes" to new congregations seeking start-up funds

**Commission on Overseas Mission** continue to send new missionary personnel

**Mennonite Biblical Seminary** maintain the strength of the current course offering.

## COE Calendar

**February**

16-19 PERSPECTIVE '84 (Minneapolis)

20-21 Young Adult Ministries Leadership Event

**April**

1-6 Project: Teach (Owen Sound, Ont.)

**Marriage Encounter Schedule**

1/13-15 Champaign, Ill.; 1/20-22 Concordia, Kan.; 2/17-19 Lima, Ohio; 2/24-28 Tulsa, Okla.; 3/2-4 Niagara Falls, Ont.; 3/16-18 North Newton, Kan.

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

# The symphony

Symphony—
a harmony of sounds
MCC—
a composition of
people with varied skills

nurse
nurses' aide
eper
development worker
social worker
nutritionist
secretary
food technologist
peace activities coordinator
product designer
prisoners' rights advocate
physiotherapist
administrator
ementary teacher
farm manager
agronomist
day care worker
agriculturist
tea room host
refugee assistance worker
mechanic
medical doctor
youth worker
horticulturist
science teacher
trucker/canner

Needed in 1984—311 workers

*Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501*
*MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8*

## About symbols and art

I read with intense interest "Give Us Pictures, Not Art" (Letters, Nov. 8 issue). I do not think that letter was all that objective, and it could use my personal footnote.

Friesen commented on a couple of the symbols designed for conference sessions. I respond to two of them. The first one involves a description of the graphics for the Bethlehem '83 workbook. The description was more along the line of an insensitive criticism, using terminology such as "snaky lines." The second was a comment made about the 1962 logo and its being perceived as a pumpkin. One has to admit that our cultural association with pumpkins might draw some visual association with the curved image, but the cross and the globe intended are also quite common images to most any Canadian or American. It simply depends on the association that each viewer makes.

The point that was most impressive to me was really between the lines, that Mennonites are, whether we like it or not, a diverse bunch of humans. Another derivation is that the public relations field is touchy business because it always deals with public taste, and each person has a particular taste. A suggestion was made that the artist might include an explanation of a given design. Explanations only work some of the time. Part of the reason why logos are so simple is because everyone is then allowed their share of similarities and diversities in the way they interpret it.

Thank God that we each have a little different slant on such issues. Thank God that there are different colors and that no one sets up rules as to which ones belong where. We should try to see more next time we look at anything. The colors of the landscape and the colors of the human figure are always full of new surprises. Finally, let us be reminded once again that for everyone who complains about someone's taste, there is always another who approves. *Clayton Funk, 428 S. Main St., Apt. 6, Bowling Green, OH 43402*

Nov. 16

## Be fair to right also

I found the article on the WCC assembly in Vancouver by Donovan E. Smucker (Oct. 25 issue) interesting and informative. He highlights approvingly believers he met who, having expressed their convictions, were persecuted; e.g. "crying out . . . against bomb threats, the dumping of nuclear wastes . . ." and another "served a prison term...for refusing to register." However, he is consistently negative when he refers to the right-wing Christian pickets. He chooses emotionally charged and colored words when he identifies Ian Paisley as a "fanatical enemy of Catholics" and Bob Jones as "president of the right-wing university which immodestly bears his name." I get the impression that while the left has an endorsement to express convictions, the right is censured in the free exercise of the same. While we do not appreciate the attitudes or political policies of the extreme fundamentalist right, they might at least be afforded fair reporting.

Even scanty research would reveal that Bob Jones University does not "immodestly" bear the name of its current president but that of its founder (his forefather) several generations ago.

Smucker's report boldly states that the WCC is "conservative in theology." Really? Has someone rewritten the theological dictionary when I wasn't looking?

I read *The Mennonite* regularly and often appreciate its fairness. *Mal J. Braun, Route 4, Gordon Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7R3*

Nov. 28

## Make one clarification

I appreciate David Habegger's concerns in his letter "What If Holy Spirit Is She?" (Nov. 22 issue) and feel that clarification on one point is in order.

The editor of *Sing and Rejoice* did not change "it" to "he" in Patty Shelly's song "Many Gifts." In fact (I was on the editorial committee), the editor made every effort to eliminate exclusive language from the texts and substitute inclusive words. Furthermore, as a committee we studied many texts and made changes to reduce their masculine imagery. To our dismay, the publisher revived the male terminology and in the case of "Many Gifts" changed the original "it" to "he."

Thank you, David, for drawing my attention again to Ms. Shelly's wonderful song. *Lauren Friesen, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526*

Dec. 5

## Non-violence/Central America

What right do U.S. Mennonite pacifists have to criticize revolutionary violence in Central America until we have done all in our power non-violently to stop our nation's much greater violence through greedy, thieving multinationals and brutal puppet dictators? Until our non-violence becomes revolutionary, revolutions will be violent.

If a 300-pound man with 10 knives has pinned down a 100-pound man with one knife, how can I tell the 100-pound man to throw away his knife while I am paying for the sharpening of the big man's 10 knives?

No U.S. war tax resister has been executed for refusing to pay war taxes. Very few have been imprisoned. Some are fined. However, Central America revolutionaries have seen countless unarmed friends and neighbors butchered or put to death slowly through malnutrition and disease caused by systemic poverty. For them to lay aside their weapons means to court death.

My heart is torn. Surely violence can corrupt a revolution and all human beings are precious. But as long as well-fed U.S. pacifists pay war taxes to support the imminent nuclear terror and mass murder of our planet and the dictatorial repression of Central America, what integrity do we have in questioning or condemning those peasants' use of violence for survival?

To be peacemakers in this perilous age, we must refuse to pay war taxes, we must renounce all materialism which breeds militarism and we must denounce foreign policy regardless of the risks for our community standing and employment.

My close friends in the Chicago-based Guatemalan theater group *Timoteo Curruchiche* have taught and sensitized me greatly concerning the plight of the poor in Central America.

Over four years ago I confronted the question "How can I speak for peace and pay for war," and I became a war tax resister. *Don Schrader, Box 171, Dakota, IL 61018*

Dec. 12

## Writer regrets error

In my article "Don't Miss God's Moving Wind" (Dec. 6 issue), I said our church has four couples involved in full-time mission work. That is correct, but I forgot to mention that we also have a single person, Ron Sawatzky, who serves under COM in Botswana. He is also important to us. *Dennis Webber, pastor, Bethlehem Mennonite, Bloomfield, MT 59315*

Dec. 14

# Hourglass 1984

*Chris Ahlemann*

Apprehensively, I watch the granular
  trickling
of tawny sand
into the nearly empty bulb
of another year.

My mind shrinks from the future
represented by that emptiness.
I yearn to grasp the wooden spindles,
to flip the hourglass over,
to survey prematurely
a nearly filled bulb.

But the hourglass is heavy—
I cannot turn it over,
I cannot see ahead.
I can only speculate.
Full pockets, a full stomach,
  a warm house—
Are these to be mine?
Or will the bony fingers of depression
squeeze them from me?
The phantom of terminal illness,
stalking the land, striking at will—
Will I become his victim?
Will one I love?
Nuclear weapons unleashed to
  infernal fury—
Will my generation be decimated?

I cover my face.
I attempt to blot out these heinous
  thoughts,
to blot out the hourglass itself.
I peek through my fingers—
it's still there,
trickling grains of tawny sand.
I begin to weep.
If only I could halt the flow.

A hand taps my shoulder.
I glimpse a kindly face—
The Creator of time himself.
He says nothing
yet the love in his eyes as he
  extends a hand
compels me to obey.
Using both hands,
I grasp the spindles of the hourglass
  and lift.
Seconds later, I sigh in relief.
I can smile now at the ensuing year—
The hourglass is in his care.

*". . . the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17b).*

# The cross summons us to prayer

When Coventry Cathedral in England was destroyed by German bombs in 1940, thousands of nails were discovered among the ruins. Crosses fashioned from these nails have been sent around the world. One place which received a cross of nails was Dresden, East Germany, where Allied bombing devastated the greater part of the city, leaving great numbers dead and homeless. The cathedral also shared in the reconstruction of a Dresden hospital which had been a victim of air raids. It is this kind of reconciliation to which we are summoned by the cross.

Since the early days of the church, the cross has served as a symbol which identified Christians and set them apart. As we seek in our own day to face the differences among various denominations and to realize the unity of the body of Christ, the cross is also a reminder of how much we have in common.

Sometimes the cross is portrayed bearing the figure of Christ, a reminder of his suffering for the sins of humanity. Other traditions use the empty cross to emphasize his resurrection. Each depiction brings out a complementary aspect of the cross. On the one hand we are reminded that Jesus' love knew no limits, on the other we recall that sin and evil cannot ultimately triumph. These truths lie at the heart of Christian worship, teaching and witness.

To the early apostles and martyrs the cross was a vivid reminder of the suffering that could be their lot during times of persecution. Even today there are people who suffer for the cross of Christ. In some cases it is at the hands of repressive and unjust governments. In other cases it is the less spectacular but no less real ridicule of insensitive people in the home, community or workplace. Through it all we can be sustained by the knowledge of God's love.

*The empty cross emphasizes Christ's resurrection and calls for prayers of promise. This hand-colored metalcut by an anonymous Dutch artist is entitled "Fragments of a Crucifixion with Mary Magdalene."*

*Christ on the cross reminds us of his suffering for our sins and calls for prayers of confession and repentance.*

We who accept that love must also be prepared to pay its price. Reconciliation among Christians and within the human family will not be achieved easily. The cross may call us to sacrifice familiar ways of doing things, perhaps even to surrender cherished grudges and prejudices. Such love is costly.

During the past two decades there has been an unprecedented collaboration among Christian denominations as we have sought together to bring the Good News to our world. We have researched and lobbied on issues of racial and economic justice, demonstrated and prayed together for peace and disarmament and worshiped together as a believing community. Our theologians have wrestled with doctrinal issues that divide us and have studied and prayed together to discover convergences which would enable us to live more faithfully as one in Christ. Together we have experienced the solidarity and joy of united efforts for good.

There are still, however, the strains of history and society and our inclinations toward separateness which hold us apart. These are constant and painful reminders that continuing conversion is necessary to effect the unity that Christ prayed for at the Last Supper (John 17:21). Many churches will set aside a special time during the month of January to pray for God's guidance.

This year's Week of Prayer is one more opportunity to recall that it is through his cross, with its reminder of suffering, love and total commitment, that we are called to oneness. Let us be strengthened by that symbol of both contradiction and hope to give ourselves more fully to prayer and action for unity and justice in the world.

## Mennonite impressions

**And When They Shall Ask**, *directed by John Morrow, produced by David B. Dueck.*

*Reviewed by Bernie Wiebe, editor*

The much-publicized 90-minute docudrama on the Russian Mennonite story premiered Nov. 24, 1983, in Winnipeg. It is an attempt to chronicle the chapters of Mennonite history from Catherine the Great's invitation in 1788 for Mennonites to come and to till the Ukraine to the present-day Mennonites in the Soviet Union.

Though billed as an epic "docudrama," the movie is neither a documentary nor a drama. It frequently flirts with both but spends its time somewhere in between.

Two groups of people must be disappointed that the movie delivers less than promised. From a Mennonite historical standpoint, the events are frequently out of sequence or out of context, and some are simply false. The movie critic who expects to see Mennonite filmmaking arrive at a professional level cannot help feeling that factors other than moviemaking got in the way.

An example of the historical inaccuracies is the retreat of the German army from Russia after World War II. While history says the Germans took the Mennonites with them, the movie makes the Mennonite emigration appear to be a later, separate event.

While there are vestiges of good photography in some of the Russia scenes and those done at the Steinbach museum, there are disconnected segments of film and script at several places. A most glaring one is at the Riga border crossing. While given a panoramic view of the train and the gate, it is obvious that there are no props at all within sight for the border guards, who appear from nowhere and strike terror into the passengers.

The film could better be called impressions of the Russian Mennonite story. Seen from such a perspective, I believe it rates highly. There is moving footage of the beautiful Ukraine, past and present. Its rich potential becomes obvious. Interviews with former Russian residents reflect on missed opportunities to witness of their "turn the other cheek" lifestyle to their Russian servants.

When the hard times come, Mennonites show their humanness as they are buffeted by White army, Red army, Machno's anarchistic banditry and the starvation years. Some join in a self-defense army, and others pray for deliverance by the Germans. But the upheaval goes on.

Somehow the faith perseveres. Many flee the country, all lose their land, and those remaining in Russia are dispersed into the interior during the Stalin era. Thousands are killed, families are separated, plundered and abused. But their "turn the other cheek" lifestyle shows up, possibly stronger than ever, in 1983 footage taken in the coal mining city of Karaganda. The film climaxes with a reunion of brothers separated over 56 years and a holy communion celebrated in a Mennonite church where 42 people have just been received into membership upon confession of faith.

For a glimpse of impressionistic vignettes that can put you more in touch with your story, I recommend that you see *And When They Shall Ask.*

## The Yeshiva girl

**Yentl**, *a Barwood film directed by Barbra Streisand, produced by Barbra Streisand and Rusty Leorand, screenplay by Barbra Streisand and Jack Rosenthal*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editorial assistant for* The Mennonite

*Yentl* is the product of a longstanding dream that Barbra Streisand has worked hard to bring to the screen. Her dream began in 1968 when she first read "Yentl, the Yeshiva Boy" by Isaac Bashevis Singer, upon which the film is based. Although she has had to face many obstacles, the first from Singer himself, she has succeeded wonderfully.

It is the story of a Polish rabbi's daughter with an overwhelming passion for studying the Talmud, the Jewish sacred writings. But such a vocation is forbidden to females in the *shtetl* village culture of the early 1900s. When her father dies, Yentl dresses as a boy in order to get into a Yeshiva. Taking the name of Anshel, she is taken under the wing of an older student, Avigdor, whom she hopelessly loves while he prepares to marry the beautiful Hadass. When the engagement is broken, Avigdor persuades his buddy Anshel to marry Hadass in his place, and the delightful ironies, already begun, become even more fun.

One can't help comparing this film to *Tootsie*, in which a man disguises himself as a woman. Each film has its special charms, each is well done. But while Dorothy Michaels in *Tootsie* is more convincing as a disguise (as Anshel, Streisand still looks like Streisand), certain scenes in *Yentl* are more touching, more powerful in their effect. Both films are fun yet strike deeply at the prejudice, ignorance and social mores that separate men and women. The scenes in *Yentl* between Anshel and Hadass especially portray the kind of understanding between the sexes in which love and friendship are nurtured in a wholesome way.

Despite my aversion to musical dramas, this one worked for me. Streisand is the only performer, and the songs serve to show Yentl's secret thoughts. The songs vary in quality and sound similar, but Streisand can sing in a way that enhances the drama.

A couple of things I didn't like. When Yentl finally reveals her true identity to Avigdor, his change from horror to acceptance is too quick. And the final scene on the boat to America is too schmaltzy, besides leaving the impression that she won't find such prejudices in good 'ole America. But these don't ruin what is a delightful and thoughtful film.

# MEDITATION

## New Year's resolution

"Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:
'Whom shall I send,
and who will go for us?'
Then said I, 'Here am I, send me.' "
*Isaiah 6:8*

To hear the voice of the Lord
is an awesome thing.
Like Adam, one would rather hide
than answer.
Like Jonah, one would rather go
in the opposite direction.
Like the disciples, one has many
legitimate excuses.

For to hear the voice of the Lord
commands obedience, self-denial
and our entire will.
It puts us at the crossroads
of our inner being,
in conflict with all we hold essential.
The very drives of our existence
are in turmoil.
Fear and trust alternately grip us
in their struggle for control.

Fear—when I hold back—because the future
is uncertain and I fear uncertainties.
Fear—when I resist the humiliation
of following an often unclear voice.
Fear—because I feel threatened
by the risk of insecurity.
Fear—that I am not suited to making continual
adjustments. I need stability. I need . . .
so many things, Lord,
and
Trust—that God does know the future,
that he is and always will be in control.
Trust—because it is exactly the humble
and the contrite he relates to.
Trust—because the only thing worth securing
is eternity.
Trust—for he has promised to supply all needs,
to suit my strength to the task,
and to bless in ways beyond and above
my asking or expectations.

Then why the struggle?
It is the battle between the tangible and the intangible,
the known and the unseen.
But when I hear the voice of the Lord,
not the voice of a taskmaster but of a shepherd,
not the voice of a commander but of a Savior
and a friend,
Will I not say—
"Here am I, send me"?

*Alma Bauman Bartel*

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It's 1984, the year English author George Orwell wrote about in his famous book of several decades ago. He wrote about "big brother" spying on us (one of many unusual events). With the coming of the computer, we sometimes do wonder if there is any privacy left. All the more reason for us Christians to learn to live more transparently vulnerable, much in the manner Jesus seemed to live every day of his life. We believe that our New Year's issue can help us live in hope and with power for today.


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# editorial

## Do we have a leadership crisis?

*Vern Preheim*

Occasionally I hear the expression, "General Conference has a leadership crisis." What is meant by this? In what sense is it true? If it is true, what should we do about it?

God has given many gifts to the church. Among them is the ability of individuals and groups to discern, decide and implement or make desired things happen. This is the function of effective leadership, a gift from God to the church.

At its first meeting, Oct. 28-29, the new General Board for the 1983-86 triennium reflected on the state of the General Conference. A recurring note in that reflection was appreciation for good leadership with special commendation for the GC staff.

I am gratified with the seriousness with which the General Board members take their responsibilities. They obviously do their homework. They enter into the deliberations with great intensity, earnestly seeking God's will as we struggle with difficult agenda.

Over the past 20 years, I have noticed that attendance and participation of members of boards and commissions and committees is consistently excellent.

Some individuals and congregations think GC leadership has missed the mark by one or more of the following: by tackling the wrong issues, for example, the issue of taxes used for military purposes; by ignoring or being too soft on some concerns, for example, the problems of alcohol and abortion; by devoting too much attention or energy to issues and not enough to the basics, such as evangelism. They may be partly right. Staff and elected officials cannot please everyone, but we try to listen to everyone's point of view and discern God's will.

The boards, commissions and their staff are but one dimension of General Conference. Other aspects are the area conferences, the institutions and conference-related organizations and, most important of all, the congregations. Some of these entities may face a leadership crisis of some kind. The 1960s seemed to turn people away from church-related vocations. Clearly in pastoral leadership, and probably in other areas as well, we have a noticeable shortage of people in the 30-40 years of age range. This phenomenon will be a problem for us for some time. It is a kind of leadership crisis, but we will compensate for it somehow.

The church and conference cannot take for granted the next generation of leaders. The present generation needs to model leadership, identify individuals with gifts, encourage them, allow them to develop those gifts and at appropriate times step aside in a manner which will facilitate smooth leadership transitions.

A significant dimension of our leadership crisis has been unclarity on the kind of leaders we want and need. The prevailing mood of the past two decades has been one of distrust of strong leadership. Consequently we have hindered rather than helped the development of strong leaders. Out of that cauldron has emerged a concept of leadership which we now identify as shared leadership and servant leadership. We are making progress in clarifying the style of leadership which we want as a people. The climate for the functioning of leadership has improved measurably.

Servant leadership in a stance of mutual submission is an attractive biblical and functional model for decision making and implementation. Leaders serve rather than rule the community. Servant leadership is easier to practice within a team of people committed to the concept of servanthood.

Participatory decision making often takes a long time. But in the long run it proves to be more effective because the power has generated a support base for the implementation of the decision.

We are in a complex, fluid society which makes effective leadership more difficult but also more important. In a measure, we all share responsibility in charting the course for our congregations and conferences.

Thank God for leaders. Remember these people in your prayers and, equally important, keep communication open with them. Share your ideas, your questions and your concerns about your congregation, camp, college, conference or whatever with the appropriate leaders. It will make a difference.

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The 1983 index of *The Mennonite* is available from our editorial offices (see inside back cover for addresses).

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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The Old Oak in Chortitza

# One glimpse of the Russia Mennonite story

*Bernie Wiebe*

**It began at the old oak tree.** The first Mennonite settlers to southern Russia arrived in July 1789 after more than a year-long trek from Prussia. On March 22, 1788, eight families set out by wagon caravan from Danzig to the banks of the Chortitza, a tributary to the beautiful Dnieper River. Upon reaching this wide valley, there were some deep disappointments. The hills were bleak and steep; trees scarce. Housing would pose a severe problem.

But there, on that first night in what became the Chortitza Colony, or Old Col-

ony, they found shelter under a unique oak tree. Today's Soviet scientists say it is about 700 years old. From earliest times in Russia, modest Mennonites designated it the 100-year-old oak. Later some became bold enough to nickname it the 1,000-year-old oak.

To see it today as we (my daughter and I led a tour group of 29 from June 26-July 16, 1983) did, is to understand several things. The old oak stands—in size and majesty—over that region. It has more recently been designated part of a national park. From the history of the first Mennonites to settle in Russia, it is clear they experienced many disappointments and discouragements. Life was different from Prussia and it was hard. Such a natural cathedral as the old oak served as a sign from God to our people. Human ideas and endeavors may have a brief lifespan; God's beautiful creation endures. Our efforts can create temporarily nice homes and landscapes; God's superior agricultural skills are evident in scenes like that of the old oak. I can see why they made camp near the gnarled trunk with its mighty and expansive branches. Even today it generates peace, hope and reverence as it lifts one's eyes to the heavens. In times of stress, the old oak served as a place for rest, for entertainment (it's excellent for climbing, swinging on the branches and as a center for games and gatherings) and probably for worship. It surely has and continues to serve an important historical role for our people's Russia chapter.

**The villages stood proud.** From the first villages of Rosental (named by Johann Bartsch, one of the advance scouts who recommended a move to Russia) and Chortitza on the island (where the other scout, Jakob Hoeppner built his home), the Old Colony grew to 15 villages with 400 families farming about 90,000 acres of land in the southern Ukraine by 1800. More villages came later.

On the island today we find mainly an old cemetery which evidences a Mennonite presence in the past. In Rosental and other villages there are still many remains testifying to the hard work and development by Mennonites.

There was no minister among the first people to set out for Russia. This posed a problem very soon, and Bernhard Penner was elected from among them and later commissioned by letter from the Danzig elders. The first church building in the Old Colony is said to have been an abandoned mill. As times got a little better, many beautiful churches were built.

In 1804 a second settlement—on the small Molotschna River (even today you may miss it unless you look carefully)—was begun. This second wave of Prussian Mennonites came with more money, better education and with many personal belongings. By 1835 there were 1,200 families in 58 villages in the Molotschna. Halbstadt and Gnadenfeld served as administrative centers. Today these centers are still prominent in the Soviet context and we found ample evidence remaining of the many durable buildings erected by the Mennonites.

At the peak of the Russian Mennonite saga, well over 100,000 Mennonites lived in well-developed villages in various parts of Russia.

It hurts even a two-generations-removed descendant of these Russian pioneers to realize how drastically their accomplishments were marred by revolution, war and collectivization. To see some of the ruins dating back to our ancestors is to witness high human achievement. Some of the remaining church buildings—like Petershagen and Landskrone—speak of a strong spiritual fiber. The quality of architecture and construction in factories, mills, homes, schools, fences and hospitals is ahead of its time.

**Karaganda in Kazakhstan.** Our visit took us to the city of Karaganda in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. Records suggest there was a small settlement here in 1926. With the collectivization of land and industry, the Soviet Union chose to develop the coal mining potential of Karaganda. Today it is a city of over half a million.

Among the people dispersed to Karaganda were many Mennonites. We were told that about 10 percent of its population is German (not only Mennonites), and there are regular German radio broadcasts (several of us were interviewed by the German broadcasting section). The Mennonite Brethren and the *Kirchliche* (Church) Mennonite worship services were totally German.

There in Asia, close to the China border, it felt strange to visit Mennonite homes and churches in this large coal mining center. Our group was given total liberty to come and go among the homes and churches in the city. I visited in more than a half dozen homes (it never took long for the house to fill up with guests once we got there) and preached in three churches. Walter Sa-

**The old building in Gnadenfeld is a mute reminder of the advanced architectural development accomplished by our people in the Ukraine.**

The Kirchliche youth jam-packed this living room on a late Sunday afternoon.

watzky writes in *Soviet Evangelicals* that there was only one registered Mennonite church in Karaganda until 1975. At that time the Kirchliche group received registration apart from the Mennonite Brethren, even though to date they still utilize the same building.

Unfortunately, even in the Soviet Union, the old wounds heal slowly. The Kirchliche Mennonites were not served communion nor given full membership status in the Mennonite Brethren church. One of the main issues for dispute is baptism by immersion in a stream. I personally encountered the dilemma. When we arrived in Karaganda, I was invited to preach the main sermon where 41 newly baptized people would be received into the MB church. This I did gladly. But the invitation for communion the following day was explicity extended to those "baptized with the biblical *Flusstaufe* (river baptism)." There was no invitation for me to speak or attend (much less participate).

In contrast, the Kirchliche Mennonites invited me and two MBs (one a minister, the other a lay preacher) from our group to preach in their services on Saturday and Sunday. And the Baptist church invited me not only to give the communion sermon but to share communion with them.

The services in all three congregations were attended by numbers larger than their membership. To pause for prayer in one of these churches is to experience something new. In the stillness there grows a special sound. It felt like a heavenly sound to me and reminded me of the biblical Pentecost. I did not ask, but it seemed like many began to utter prayers which grew from silent reflection into passionate whispers accompanied by tears and urgent pleadings. The singing is also of a different nature than ours. It is more nasal but also more intense. In fact, it was the overall intensity of involvement in the total service which impressed me most.

And they seemed to gladly endure overcrowding and standing in the aisles on hot summer days. Sunday after church saw homes overcrowded with youth meeting for another couple of hours. When I spoke of quitting and leaving, they insisted we continue the singing and sharing.

The choir sings for the service at the Saturday Bible study in the Kirchliche church.

*"That which has been done in the name of Jesus Christ will never pass away."*

**Julius Siebert family (elder of the Karaganda Kirchliche Church) and guests gave us a warm welcome.**

The overall hospitality shown to our group by the people we met in Karaganda was beautifully warm. Nobody left without making some friends in Christ. They took us in as family.

**Their faith lives on.** The old oak stands in the modern Soviet industrial city of Zaporozhye as proudly today as it did 200 years ago when Mennonites first came to Russia at the invitation of Catherine II. If it could tell us what has transpired with our people in the Ukraine and in other parts of the Soviet Union these last two centuries, it would be quite a tale. We heard many anecdotes from those in our group who were born in the Soviet Union but had left, and we heard many more from those who stayed—some voluntarily, some involuntarily. Horrors of anarchy, banditry, wars, famines, persecution, separation, dispersion and broken promises were mixed with tales of unusual prosperity and grandeur. There were also confessions of failures to "read the signs" and to give spiritual care and considerations their proper place. Many said they now enjoy relatively good times and feel God's faithfulness. They are apprehensive for the future—both because of the atheistic culture surrounding them and because of the growing world nuclear threat. Many concerns, like divorce, adolescent rebellion, materialism, lack of evangelism and mission zeal, sounded like home.

While living in homes not unlike ours 30 years ago in southern Manitoba (Karaganda has many private homes which people own; the land is leased) and worshiping in churches also similar to our buildings of several decades ago, our people in the Karaganda area are industrious and moving ahead. Youth spoke of studying computer science and medicine just as our youth do.

Our people there long for more Christian literature and for opportunities to study the Bible together with people who have been to Bible college and seminary. They would like to hear more intelligent discussions about Christianity and communism, about Anabaptist/Mennonite and other Christians, about Jesus and today's world.

I spent long hours in conversation with elected leaders and with lay people. They showed a hunger for dialogue and spiritual understanding. Whatever else has happened and will happen, one thing became clear: That which has been done and will be done in the name of Jesus Christ will never pass away. It may be buffeted about and denied or disguised, but we live in God's world and we are God's people. In God's diary, the faith lives on and on and on. . . . •

**The former beautiful church at Petershagen now serves as a granary.**

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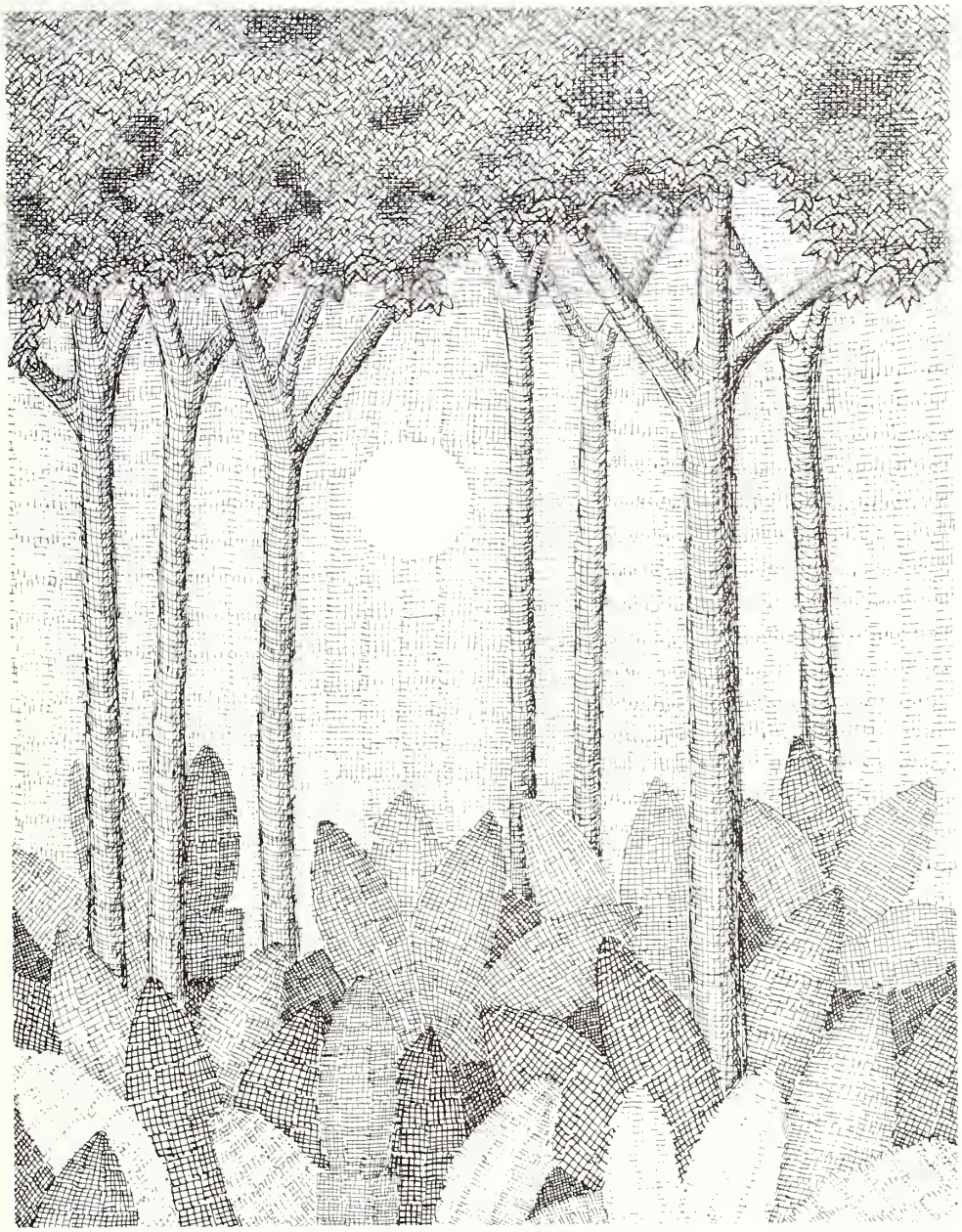
# Evangelical witness for peace

*Ronald J. Sider*



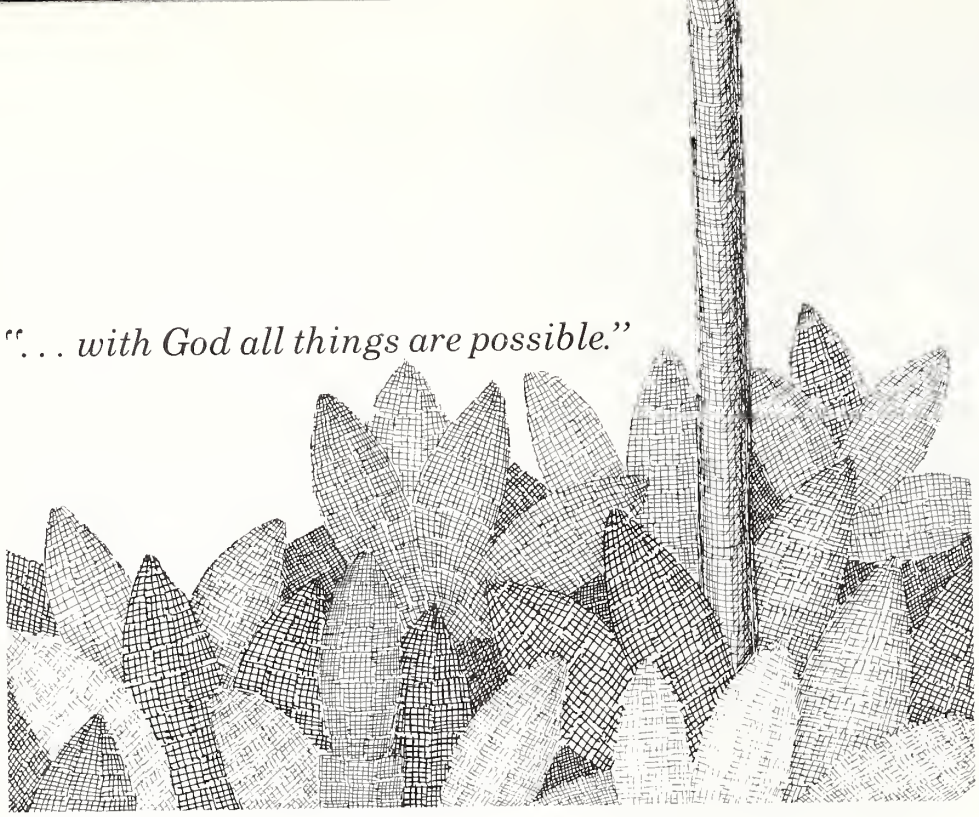
Most evangelical Christians want the arms race stopped. Most evangelical Christians are proud of Billy Graham's courageous peace pilgrimage to Moscow in spite of vigorous opposition from the U.S. State Department. More and more evangelical Christians are coming to the conclusion that nuclear war could never be justified. In fact, President Reagan's pastor, Donn Moomaw of Bel Air Presbyterian Church, a well-known evangelical, said in a recent sermon, "Because nuclear weapons are so destructive, so devastating, so final . . . they are morally indefensible. I must be a nuclear pacifist."

As citizens of our diverse, pluralistic society today—Baptists and Buddhists, Catholics and charismatics, Jews and Jesuits, humanists and Hindus, Muslims and Methodists—we say no to nuclear madness. Each of us has our own way of explaining why our deepest beliefs compel us to oppose the arms race. Because we respect each other's different traditions we need to share with each other the diverse bases of our common concern for peace. I as an evangelical Christian share why I believe that continuing with the nuclear arms race would be one of the most immoral decisions in history.

**Not an accident.** Christians believe that the good earth, all life, and you and I are the creation of a personal, loving God. I do not believe that people and nature have resulted from the accidental combination of subatomic matter in a blind materialistic process. If that were true, people would merely be complex machines and ethical values—even about peacemaking—would be totally subjective products of blind chance. Certainly the Creator used a gloriously complex evolutionary process stretching over vast geological ages to create the world. But it was not an accident.

The almighty Creator is an infinite person who wants to be in free, loving relationship with finite people. So the Creator molded you and me in the divine image. That is why I believe that every person is of infinite value. The worth of individuals does not depend on their productivity or usefulness to society. Every person is created in God's image for a personal relationship with the Lord of the universe. That is why it is wrong for communist totalitarians to sacrifice millions of people for the alleged benefit of the state. That is why it is wrong for U.S. and Soviet militarists to build megaton weapons that will destroy people by the hundreds of millions.

Not just people but the earth itself also comes from the Creator's loving hand. As I worked on my book *Nuclear Holocaust and Christian Hope*, my love for the gorgeous beauty of the earth grew deeper and deeper. As I faced the stark



*". . . with God all things are possible."*

reality that human madness might well destroy our little planet in my lifetime, I fell more deeply in love with the soft gentle breezes, the majestic redwoods and the purple sunset. Christians believe the earth is a ring from the beloved to be cherished and preserved, not an accidental commodity to be exploited and destroyed. To continue down the path that makes nuclear destruction ever more likely reflects not merely callous contempt for future generations; it also demonstrates a blasphemous affront to the Creator of this gorgeous, fragile planet.

The Creator intended people to live together in harmonious human society shaping cultures and civilizations of beauty, justice and peace. But human history is a tragic mixture of good and evil. So often human greed, national pride and sheer selfishness have led to ghastly conflict. Choosing to deny that we are made for an obedient relationship with God, choosing to love ourselves more than our neighbor, we have created an upward spiral of violence. Clubs gave way to cannons, firebombs to 20-megaton nuclear warheads. Today we stand trembling at the precipice, peering fearfully into the nuclear abyss.

But still I have hope. I believe it is possible to obtain nuclear disarmament in the next 25 years. But the basis of my hope is not primarily the growing anti-nuclear movement, although I am deeply involved in and highly grateful for that movement. The basis of my hope is God.

Christian faith reminds me that God has taken the initiative to correct all that is evil and unjust in the world. Christians believe that the Creator of the galaxies actually took on human flesh and walked the dusty paths of Palestine as a humble teacher. He taught that we should be peacemakers and love our enemies. He cared for the poor and the weak, the sick and the social outcasts, whom the powerful always ignore. And he said that God loves even the people who have messed up their lives the worst, even those who had fallen into the grossest selfishness and sin. And then he took one incredible additional step. He said he was going to die for precisely those kinds of people.

Now his radical acceptance of those who had harmed themselves, their families and their neighbors was not based on some kind of cheap indulgence. In fact he said that harming other people is not just an awful offense against the neighbor. It is also a terrible affront against the Creator who created neighbors in the divine image. Therefore oppressors and sinners are God's enemies because they disrupt the harmony of God's good creation. But Jesus said God loves his sinful enemies so much that he would die for them.

As God in the flesh, Jesus Christ said he would take all the evil of his sinful enemies upon himself. Because he loved them, he would take on himself the punishment they deserved for their violence, oppression and sin. At the cross God himself suffered the agony of Roman crucifixion for sinful enemies. That is the foundation of Jesus' call to our enemies. It is because Jesus knew that the Creator of the galaxies loves his enemies enough to suffer incredible agony for them that he taught that his followers should also love their enemies.

But isn't that just utopian drivel? Don't we live in a violent, vicious world where loving enemies does not work? Didn't Jesus' life end in failure at the cross?

**We hope because Jesus lives.** Now failure would be the proper conclusion, except for one thing. Jesus did not stay dead. On the third day he was alive again. On Easter morning the tomb was empty. By raising Jesus from the dead, God proved that Jesus' way of loving enemies was not naive utopianism, but God's way to peace. By raising Jesus from the dead, God proved that Jesus was correct in teaching that God was busy restoring the broken beauty of human society.

It is because I know that the Peacemaker from Nazareth rose from the dead that I have hope today. It is because I know that the Teacher of peace was God in the flesh that I dare to commit my life to the long, costly struggle for nuclear disarmament.

But I don't say that easily. I don't for a minute suppose that I can persist in the long, 25-year struggle against nuclear holocaust in my own strength. Let's not kid ourselves. Nuclear disarmament will not happen in a year or two or three, even if—please God—Americans can elect a president in '84 committed to nuclear disarmament rather than nationalistic superiority. If nuclear disarmament comes at all, if we succeed in avoiding nuclear holocaust, it will happen only after long exhausting decades of costly struggle.

Why do *I* hope to be able to walk that long, weary road? Christians believe that the risen Lord Jesus now lives in those who open their lives to him. Paul said, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." From personal experience I know that the risen Jesus lives in me. I know that he calls me to oppose nuclear madness, because creation is a divine gift to be treasured, because every human life is sacred, because God loves his enemies and calls on me to love my enemies. I cannot do that in my own strength. But I don't have to, because Christ lives in me.

The task before us is awesome. The next two decades are the most dangerous in human history. But we can succeed. We can rid the world of the monstrous evil of nuclear weapons. The Creator of the galaxies is on the side of peace. In realistic political terms, nuclear disarmament looks extremely difficult. But it is not impossible, for with God all things are possible. Let's join him to make the planet safe for your children and mine.

# Goliath tells his story

*Victor Stoltzfus*

I am Goliath of Gath, a Philistine. You will understand me because you also are noted for emphasis on military preparedness and have large, well-equipped armies.

My words to you are from two perspectives: *before* I met David and *afterward*.

*First*, Sam's book describes me as a fighting man from my youth, a career military man, a professional.

I am interested in the security of our people and in adding land, timber and mines as the tribe expands. These resources are vital to the economic growth of our country.

We have mastered the technology of iron mining and smelting for weaponry and commercial use. It is exhilarating to move from the bronze age to the iron age. Iron technology is, of course, a closely guarded military secret among us.

From declassified reports I can tell you the iron tip on my spear weighs about 15 lbs. When it enters the human torso just below the rib cage and thrusts up into the heart-lung area, death comes quickly; it kills the enemy, or as you moderns would say, "wastes him."

My iron sword takes a much keener edge than bronze models. My javelin is of an older technology but one must have respect for military tradition. The javelin is on my back in a sling and is thrown as the enemy advances, before we get close enough for hand-to-hand combat.

Together these weapons form a triad. I understand your weapon systems are also in three parts: missiles launched from land, sea and air.

My military preparedness includes defensive systems: a bronze helmet, my armored coat weighing 125 pounds and the metal protectors on my legs. It takes me nearly 30 minutes and two helpers to get all this on, but it will repel any current enemy weapons.

You have a historical advantage with your fallout shelters stocked with drinking water and 25-year-old food supplies in tin cans. I understand one of your current military strategists points out the importance of a defensive system called the shovel. Philistines can relate to that even though we don't know what you mean by radioactivity.

The military aspect I enjoy most is what you call propaganda or psychological warfare. People say I have an imposing appearance. With all respect to your basketball players Ralph Sampson and Dr. J., remember that I am nine feet tall. My neck begins where their scalps leave off.

*That Israelite shepherd boy had a weird faith that his God would help him even against me. Can you imagine such a foolish trust?*

I also know the importance of threat or "winning through intimidation." Sam's book correctly mentions that I repeated my challenge to the Israelites for 40 days. They heard me first thing before breakfast and last thing before they went to sleep—if they could sleep.

Sam's book says, "Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified." Another place he wrote, "When the Israelites saw (me) they all ran . . . in great fear."

You also know the importance of threatening the enemy. I favor the proposal one of your leaders has made to build additional radio transmitters for government propaganda. When psychological warfare is successful, you don't need physical combat. As your strategists say, We arm in order to deter. We want to become so strong that no aggressor would dare attack us.

The Israelites have a poem about fearing no evil in the valley. My version is, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, because I'm the tallest, best-trained, best-equipped, loudest fighting man in the valley—and you can even throw in the mountain for good measure."

Their poem also illustrates the Israelite faith in their god. I'll admit that once in a while their god did help them out. But their single god was no match for our many gods. Why, one of our gods could keep their god busy while the rest of them helped us on the battlefield. This is the basis of what you call a "first-strike policy"—having so many weapons that you can assign one of yours to every one of theirs and still have some left over.

I have one point of advice for you on the issue of armies and religion. Like the Israelites, you have trouble with religious leaders getting involved in military matters. Military issues are best left to military specialists. We know how to turn basic confidence in ourselves, our weapons systems and our superior culture into military victory. In fact, it is somewhat insulting to even plan a military strategy against a bunch of raggedy-tent nomads barely adjusted to town life and settled farming. They still have the desert dust in their clothes and desert notions in their heads.

For my *second* point, I refer to A.D. (after David).

Lacking a professional soldier who had the nerve to fight by the honorable rules of warfare, this young shepherd approached my armor bearer and me. With no prospect of glorious battle and heroic promotion, I was disappointed, even insulted. I promptly cussed him out by our gods and promised to make him into birdfood.

He invoked the name of Israel's God. Fearless and naive, he ran toward me and my armor bearer. He loaded his slingshot with a stone from his pouch, wound up and let fly—and that's the end of my story.

*Victor Stoltzfus shared Goliath's story with the Assembly Mennonite Church about a year ago. Recently Vic was promoted from dean to become the president of Goshen College at Goshen, IN 46526.*

# An old tune sparks new faith

*Frieda Barkman*

When I was a child we didn't talk about God in our everyday "Plattdeutsch" (Low German). Nor did we talk to God out loud in our home. But every morning (along with our oatmeal) and every night (no matter how sleepy) we listened as Papa read the Bible to us in his somewhat expressionless High German, our church language. Then we knelt for silent prayer. Amidst the creaks of our chairs I sometimes tried speaking to God in our church-German, but in the middle of a laborious sentence Papa's shuffle would signal us all to get up. Not till I went to school did I realize God could hear me in English and/or Plattdeutsch.

Mama sang about God while milking, while washing dishes, while kneading bread, and taught us to sing "Gott ist die Liebe" (God is love). We sang it lustily while walking the furrows behind Papa's plow and while we stopped to rest the horses and as we watched God paint a sunset. We sang "Gott ist die Liebe" to my dolls. (My brother Paul played dolls with me as long as I told no one.) We sang "Gott ist die Liebe" at *Kinderfest*—our summer church celebration that ended with ice cream.

The song held a strong comfort for my child heart. Every Sunday school class from nursery to teen age performed at Kinderfest, parading up and down the steps of the Alexanderwohl "high" platform, which took most of the afternoon. (It was a long wait for the ice cream.) Among those first times away from Mama, some didn't make it; in tears they were carried back to safety. I, so bashful that I'd cry if someone looked at me, felt great empathy with those lost between mama's lap and that formidable platform, but I was not a casualty. "Gott ist die Liebe" had power to calm my fears. I sang bravely.

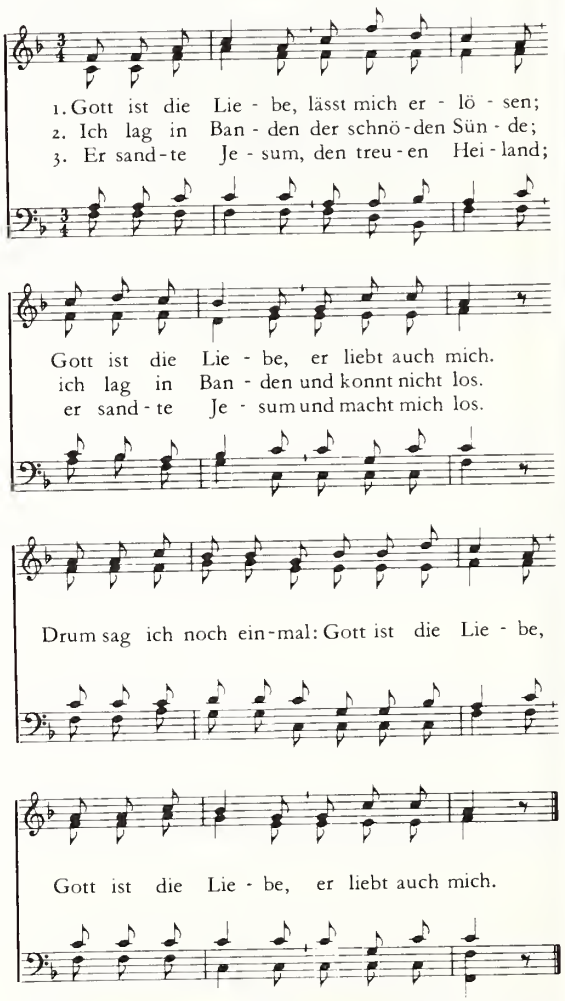
I lived at the end of an era. I was a third-generation American. The German language that our forebears brought along with their faith from the low countries of Europe to the steppes of the Crimea in Russia, and from there to the Great Plains of Kansas, was dying out. Fewer and fewer old ladies with high pinched waistlines and black bonnets sat in our pews. With the last of them, German disappeared from our pulpits and from our hymnbooks. But language is not ultimate. Cultures may change; God does not.

Still I felt a sadness because "Gott ist die Liebe" was lost to the next generation, to our children. Oh, we taught them one verse and the chorus, and they sang it like they sang one verse of "Stille Nacht" (Silent Night).

Determined to retrieve "Gott ist die Liebe" for our Lisa and John, I searched through old hymnbooks from the turn of the century and found varying verses, nine altogether. The 1840 Thüringer tune, an innocent melody, lends itself to repetition, so like a ballad this story of

1. Johannes 4, 16: Gott ist die Liebe; und wer in der Liebe bleibt, der bleibt in Gott und Gott in ihm.

Meiningen, 1840




4. Jesus, mein Heiland, gab sich zum Opfer; / Jesus, mein Heiland, büsst meine Schuld. / Drum sag ich noch einmal: / Gott ist die Liebe, / Gott ist die Liebe, / er liebt auch mich.

August Rische, 1819–1906

**God loves so dearly**
Translation by *Frieda Barkman*
Copyright, 1983

1. God loves so dearly,
   He sent the Savior;
   God loves so dearly,
   loves even me.

*Refrain:*
Again I'll sing it!
God loves so dearly,
God loves so dearly,
loves even me.

2. I was a prison'r,
   sin's power enslaved me;
   I was a prison'r,
   bound hopelessly.
3. Fear and frustration,
   doubt and depression
   were schemes of Satan
   and death's disguise.
4. Then God sent Jesus,
   my great deliverer;
   then God sent Jesus
   to set me free.
5. He was the offering
   to pay death's wages;
   He was the offering
   for all I owe.
6. His Spirit drew me
   with love's sweet welcome;
   His Spirit drew me.
   Grace took me in.
7. I now inherit
   life everlasting;
   I now inherit
   His joy and peace.
8. His love embraces
   the hurt and lonely;
   HIs love embraces
   the bruised and torn.
9. O God, I love You,
   I'll always praise You.
   O God, I thank You
   for love so dear.

**References**
"Gott ist die Liebe" appeared in:
*Gesanbuch Mit Noten*, Mennonite Book Concern, Berne, Ind., 1906.
*Evangeliums Lieder 1 and 2*, Biglow and Main, 507 W. Lake St., Chicago; The Church Company, 1897.
The song appears above from *Gesangbuch der Mennoniten* by permission of Faith and Life Press, Newton, Kan., © 1965.

salvation goes on and on in utter simplicity. Could a translation preserve this?

I tried. And I had help. "Use simple words." "Oh, Mom, say it in today's language. Let go of old idioms." ("Toils and turmoils" became "frustrations and depressions.") However, sin and Satan do not change. My husband suggested, "Avoid a stilted, literal translation. There are such. Let the mood and meaning and spirit sing itself into your soul."

So over the kitchen sink, during mountain walks, while reading Hebrews, how dearly God loved us came to life.

After the "life everlasting, joy and peace" verse, John said, "You need the next verse because life is not always smooth and sweet." (We chose our own sequence of verses since no book had them all.)

"Right, disappointments may come, hopes may shatter, leaving pain and brokenness." Already John and Lisa knew that no one is immune to these things. But God in his sweet love lifts the fallen, heals the wounded and puts his children in intensive care. ("Brunn des Heiles, der Seelen Trost.") Not many books had that verse, yet it became my favorite. The Psalmist promises, "The Lord is close to those whose courage is broken and he saves those whose spirit is crushed" (Psalm 34:18).

The words flowed with the tune: *"His love embraces the hurt and lonely, His love embraces the bruised and torn."*

If we've experienced how dearly God loves us—no matter what—our song will end in a prayer. For a year I tried to write that last verse. When I gave up, maybe for the 16th time I sat at the cabin, forgot about the song and prayed. And there it was. Only a word or two had to be shifted. *"O God, I love you, I'll always praise you. O God, I thank you for love so dear."*

I had my reward. John chose this song as part of his testimony when he joined the church, saying, "We trace our family back to 1675. I want to be part of their faith."

And Lisa said, "Mom, some days God whispers in pianissimo, other days he shouts full and boisterous like a Beethoven Symphony." That's her way of saying God comes to each of us in a unique way. That's how dearly he loves.

The God of sunsets, of straight furrows (you knew Papa worked in partnership with God), the God you pray to silently or sing about while milking, the God who calms fears and heals hurts is more than an ethnic God. He is the God of our salvation. That's what this simple song says.


...and

# When They Shall Ask

*A dramatic 90-minute documentary film on the history of the Russian Mennonites*

CONFIRMED BOOKINGS

Steinbach, Man. **Steinbach Regional Secondary School**
Thursday, Jan. 19, 8 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 20, 8 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 21, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at Evangel Book Store)

Leamington, Ont. **United Mennonite Educational Institute**
Sunday, Jan. 22, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at the Et Cetera Shop

Winnipeg **Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall**
Sunday, Jan. 22, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 26, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at ATO, BTO, Crosstown Credit Unions, Dueck Film Productions Ltd.)

Morris, Man. **Morris School Theatre**
Tuesday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at Murray's Department Store and G. K. Insurance Services)

Morden, Man. **Morden Recreation Centre Hall**
Wednesday, Jan. 25, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at Nikkel Photography)

Altona, Man. **Rhineland Pioneer Centre**
Friday, Jan. 27, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at H & L Insurance)

Winkler, Man. **Winkler Bible Institute**
Saturday, Jan. 28, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at the Bible Book Shop)

Calgary **Jubilee Auditorium**
Sunday, Jan. 29, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at Bass Agencies

Lethbridge, Alta. **Yates Memorial Centre**
Monday, Jan. 30, 8 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 31, 8 p.m.
(Tickets available at Leister's Music Centre)

Ticket Information

*Check local announcements for the ticket outlets in your community, or contact:*

Mennonite Media Society
202-1695 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB R2G 1P1
Phone: (204) 661-2483

Tickets: $10.00
Set of 2 tickets plus album:
$25.00 (Advance sales only)

SOUVENIR RECORD ALBUM: Recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra
Irmgard Baerg, *pianist* Boris Brott, *conductor* Victor Davies, *composer*

**Everyone is losing ground** economically, but the poor are losing the most. So say economists at the Urban Institute, Washington, whose new study shows that the poorest 20 percent of U.S. families lost nearly one-tenth of their income in the past five years, and the top fifth lost only one percent. In a second study, research economist Stephen Rose found that President Reagan's tax policies have widened income differences. Taxes have declined for the top fifth but have increased for the bottom fifth during Reagan's administration.

**The annual Transcultural Seminar,** designed for college students and missions and service workers, will be held at Goshen (Ind.) College June 18-29. The seminar features both philosophical studies and technical training in four areas of development: tropical agriculture, education, health care and nutrition, as well as offering a general development track for those who wish to study two or more of the four areas. More details can be obtained by writing: Transcultural Seminar, Personnel Services, MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, or Transcultural Seminar, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526.

# NEWS

## Missions council studies dynamics of conflict

Chicago (Meetinghouse)—"Conflict in the church is a bit like the birth of a volcano. Like geologists, we can describe what is happening, but we can do nothing about it. And after the major eruption there are continuing aftershocks."

That was the way Peter Kehler, the General Conference Mennonite Church's secretary for Asia, introduced a case study of conflict in a Mennonite church in India. Six such case histories highlighted the agenda of the Nov. 29-30, 1983, meeting of the Council of International Ministries, held in the Chicago area.

Each case study traced the origins of the conflict, identified the precipitating crisis, outlined the degree of involvement of the mission board and field personnel in the situation and reported on the resolution (if any) of the conflict.

One case history focused on the decision to organize one church into two conferences, based on ethnic and cultural factors. Another outlined a leadership struggle occurring in a church which was an amalgamation of a number of independent congregations. A third case study spoke of the experiences of a respected church leader enmeshed in a conflict which involved a church-related institution.

Despite the variety of case studies, several recurring factors were identified, among them the process of leadership selection, the use or misuse of power, the presence of external power (colonial and/or missions) and the transition of that power to local entities, differing cultural patterns and perceptions, and interpersonal or intergroup rivalries.

Council members spent considerable time discussing ways in which the presence of missions personnel and resources are contributing factors in various conflict situations. Not fully resolved was the question of how North American mission boards might help in resolving conflict in overseas churches, particularly in those instances when they have been significant parties in the conflict itself.

Several people commented on the fact that these conflict situations were being evaluated only from a North American perspective and that valuable insights could be gained by having Third World representatives sharing in the discussion. It was also noted that North America has not been immune from conflict and division, as evidenced by the various Mennonite groups represented in CIM itself.

Invited to share in the discussion on conflict, Ron Kraybill, coordinator of MCC's Mennonite Conciliation Service, identified several key aspects of conflict management as well as reporting on the growing work of the conciliation service. Referring to Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 and Philippians 4:2-3, Kraybill said, "Nothing affects the church more than how conflict is handled."

The council agreed to continue the discussion at a subsequent meeting, looking then at such questions as how to recognize potential conflict situations with the goal of preventing conflict and how to relate administratively to groups which have broken away from recognized churches.

There were other items on the agenda. John Wall and Peter Hamm reported for the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services on their efforts to involve overseas Mennonite Brethren churches in partnership in mission. A working paper presented to the board in the fall of 1983 defines the process as internationalization—the engaging in multinational cooperation of conferences in the planning, organizing and implementing of new missionary ventures. The working paper outlines personnel policies and administrative procedures and will be discussed with representatives from the overseas churches at the next Mennonite Brethren triennial conference, which will feature a centennial celebration of missions.

In addition, council members:

- heard a report from Paul Kraybill on the upcoming Mennonite World Conference XI Assembly, including the status of the travel fund for Third World representatives;
- received an update on the missions consultation CIM is planning, which will precede Mennonite World Conference, involving some 70 people from the international Mennonite community. Wilbert Shenk, executive secretary of CIM and overseas director for Mennonite Board of Missions, outlined the contacts being made with the constituent churches around the world in an effort to build an agenda of interest to all;
- decided to reorganize the East/West Task Force of the Council, enlarging its scope to include all CIM-related concerns in Europe, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; and
- activated a planning committee to coordinate Mennonite participation in Urbana '84. *Glen Pierce*

**A Hispanic peace conference** will be held March 3-7 in Newton, Kan. Sponsored by the Hispanic ministries resource council of the Commission on Home Ministries, the peace conference will present Spanish-language workshops on the peace witness, discipleship, the ethics of love and on the principles and doctrine of the General Conference Mennonite Church. The conference will be coordinated by Miguel Espindola, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 660 E. Butterfield Road, Lombard, IL 60148, phone (312) 620-2143.

**"Celebrating Hope"** is the theme of the fourth annual convention of the Mennonite Health Association, to be held March 23-28 in Kansas City, Mo. The theme is shared by the Protestant Health and Welfare Assembly, which will be meeting concurrently. Major presentations are scheduled by Erland Waltner, MHA president; Harold Schultz, president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.; Frank Ward, pastor of Rainbow Boulevard Mennonite Church, Kansas City, Kan.; and others. For more information, write H. Ernest Bennett, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

**David A. Hubbard,** president of Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., will give the annual theological lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., Feb. 9-10. He will lecture on the book of Hosea under the theme "Insights to the Heart of Yahweh." AMBS annually hosts at least one scholar for a series of special lectures.

# Seminary boards to consider new faculty appointments

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—Recommendations on new faculty for appointments in Christian education, field education, Old Testament and pastoral ministry will be major items considered by the boards of Goshen and Mennonite Biblical Seminaries at their Jan. 19-20 meeting here.

The two boards, representing the Mennonite Church and the General Conference, jointly operate Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

Vacancies have been created by retirements, pending retirements, a service leave, and ongoing curriculum review and long-range planning.

Also on the agenda is a look at architectural plans for additional student housing. Preliminary plans are to build a two-story apartment unit of 16 apartments in the summer of 1984 and another unit the following summer.

AMBS is proposing to renovate the existing student dormitory into a combination nursery and housing for seminary guests and an enlarged recreation area.

The boards will also review recommendations for action from the Task Force on Women at AMBS and in the Church. At their fall meeting, Oct. 13-15, 1983, the boards commended the task force for its "diligent hard work and thoughtful recommendations" and asked the "administrative committee to bring specific items to the board from the report for board action."

*Mennonite Biblical Seminary trustees (seated, from left): Donovan Smucker, Waterloo, Ont.; Myron Schrag, Minneapolis; Marjorie Ediger, secretary, Arvada, Colo.; Darrell Fast, president, Toronto; (standing) Tim Schrag (student rep.); Waldemar Janzen, Winnipeg; Audrey Mierau (student rep.); LaVerna Klippenstein, Winnipeg; Dorothea Janzen, vice president, Hillsboro, Kan.; Menno Epp, Calgary; Helen Kruger, Kitchener, Ont.; Fred Liechty, Berne, Ind. Absent, Roland Goering, Freeman, S.D.*

## *Administrators holding breath over conference income*

Newton, Kan.—General Conference administrators are still hoping for a flood of contributions to come from constituents this month, the last of the 1983 fiscal year.

"As of Dec. 28, 1983, the conference's income was $130,000 or 3.5 percent ahead of last year's receipts after 11 months," said Ted W. Stuckey, conference treasurer. "However, we received only 92.7 percent of our budget last year, so we will need to make sizable gains in January if the goal of $5,064,530 is to be reached."

If present giving trends continue, Stuckey estimates that the General Conference will close its 1983 books with about 96 percent of the budget in, or roughly $200,000 short.

The various ministries of the conference include its Commission on Overseas Mission, with a budget goal of $3,291,944; the Commission on Home Ministries, with a goal of $926,809; the Commission on Education, with a goal of $410,227; and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, $435,550. The conference's Women in Mission organization has an income goal of $234,500.

Stuckey said that all contributions arriving at central offices by Jan. 31 will be counted as income for the 1983 fiscal year.

If the $5.06 million goal is not reached, it will mark the third consecutive year that the conference has failed to meet its budget.

**President James Draper** of the Southern Baptist Convention says he thinks the denomination should establish doctrinal "guidelines" and that people who cannot accept them "ought to . . . leave. . . . We have to set some kind of parameters for Baptist belief," he said. "If we don't, people will end up believing anything they want." A strong element in the Baptist tradition is opposition to creeds, the Bible being considered sufficient.

**Mennonite Central Committee's** executive committee met in Akron, Pa., Dec. 16-17, 1983, to review new program and budget plans in anticipation of the MCC annual meeting in Vancouver Jan. 27-29. A special topic at the meeting was a report on the African food situation and proposed MCC responses (see p. 37). An animated discussion occurred about a proposal to place two workers in a new MCC program in Olongapo, a town near the U.S. Subic Naval Base in the Philippines. Olongapo is plagued with human problems, including drug abuse and prostitution.

**The executive committee** of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. prepared the 1984 budget and program plans during its meetings in Akron, Pa., Dec. 14-15, 1983, in preparation for the MCC U.S. annual meeting in Blaine, Wash., Jan. 26-27. The committee will recommend a 1984 budget of $2,501,000, an increase of 21.3 percent over the $2,061,114 spent in 1983. The most significant 1984 budget increases were in the regional offices, Urban Ministries Office, voluntary service units and the Development Education Office.

## Battling hunger in Western hemisphere's poorest nation

Bois de Laurence, Haiti—The dirt road ends here, 2,500 feet up in the mountains of Haiti's Central Plateau. Women lug water on their heads in five-gallon cans to the hodge-podge mud and wattle houses of the village. Electricity lines do not reach this far.

A group of jabbering children gathers around foreigners who have come to town—to stay. The strangers make up a new Mennonite Central Committee unit that opened here in November 1983.

Dana and Kathleen Neff from Manhattan, Kan., and Neil and Kristi Rowe-Miller from Goshen, Ind., have come to look for ways to help this remote area of the Western hemisphere's poorest nation. Eldon Stoltzfus from Rehobeth, Md., MCC's country representative, says the MCC workers have been visiting the area for over a year to meet local leaders and assess the village's needs.

Nutrition is poor. Many children have thin arms and swollen bellies, signs of malnutrition.

Health care is minimal. The town has a dispensary, but the nearest hospital is hours away over rough roads. The hospital is known as the place where people go to die.

Soil washes from the mountainside plots in the rainy season. Low-yield crops sap the land's fertility.

Poverty leads to a sense of fatalism. The peasants compete for the few resources rather than work together to improve their lives.

The MCC workers hope to attack these problems by forming groups of about 10 villagers. Each group will work in a particular area, such as clean water, literacy or nutrition, says Kathleen Neff. The Neffs spent three years working with groups like this in nearby Mombin Crochu. Neil Rowe-Miller also spent a year there teaching farming methods.

Kathleen, a nutritionist, says Bois de Laurence's isolation may make her task of teaching easier since the people are not spoiled by the handouts some foreigners offer. "People are more willing to work for the good of the community," she says.

*MCC worker Neil Rowe-Miller listens to a neighbor in Bois de Laurence, Haiti. Neil and his wife, Kristi, and Dana and Kathleen Neff moved into this isolated village in November and hope to encourage the establishment of small community groups to work on the many problems that face Haitians there.*

Kristi Rowe-Miller's work will include preventive health care. This is because Western medical treatment is impossible in the isolated Bois de Laurence. Kristi says she is trying to learn how the peasants deal with illness and injury. She meets frequently with the dispensary worker. And she has called on the local bone setters and herb doctors who care for people who have no doctor. Kristi hopes to teach them more effective medical treatments.

Kathleen and Kristi will work to combat malnutrition in part through education. "That's the big canopy over everything," says Kristi.

Neil Rowe-Miller's work will also help fight hunger. His biggest task is to increase food crop yields. One way to do this is to encourage farmers to erect contour barriers on the hills to prevent erosion. Another way is for farmers to grow legumes in their fields. These plants replenish the soil's nitrogen and increase its fertility. Neil will also try to introduce higher-yielding seeds.

Dana Neff worked closely with small groups in the Mombin Crochu unit. His work includes training group motivators to lead the groups. Dana plans to lead Bible studies on topics of discipleship and justice.

Haitians are proud of their nearly 200 years of independence. But, Dana says, many of them are unaware that slavery exists today in forms such as Voodoo (the Haitian folk religion), gambling in the lottery and authorities who abuse power. The groups and studies teach people to recognize and overcome these enslavements. In one area, he says, villagers grew confident enough to stand up to police brutality against a group member.

The MCC workers live in simple homes similar to those of the Haitians around them. The Rowe-Millers plan to build a mud-brick house, although they admit that the delays in getting permission to build have been frustrating. In the meantime they are renting a home with a hard-packed dirt floor. *Russell Working*


### Business manager - fund raiser

**Swift Current Bible Institute** is receiving applications for the position of business manager-fund raiser.

Person must have bookkeeping experience and be skilled in public relations.

Position available **May 1, 1984**.

Apply to:
David Ortis, principal
Swift Current Bible Institute
Box 1268
Swift Current, SK S9H 3X4.

**The Reagan administration** is planning to undermine the rights of dying people by reducing Medicare funding for hospice care, officials of the National Hospice Association charged in Minneapolis. Hugh Westbrook, the organization's public policy chief, received loud applause from hospice delegates when he accused the White House Office of Management and Budget of trying to "balance the budget on the backs of dying people."

**The American flag** at the post office around the corner from Disneyland flew at half-staff to honor the 230 soldiers who died in Lebanon in late October 1983. But at "The Magic Kingdom" two out of three flags were not lowered. "We don't want to remind visitors of the tragedies outside the gates," said park publicist Al Flores. "Disneyland is a place of fantasy. People come here to escape, and they couldn't do that if we kept reminding them of the problems in the everyday world." (*The Wall Street Journal*)

**CTV Television Network Ltd.** is the most violent of 30 TV networks around the world, according to a study presented to the United Nations. "CTV's prime time was a ghetto of American violence with combat police shows and violent movies" averaging 11.1 acts of violence per hour, according to the U.S.-based National Coalition on Television Violence. "None of the violence could be said to serve an educational function." CTV is Canada's largest privately-owned TV network.

# Drought not the only cause of Africa's new famine

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—In the last few months we have been inundated with news of another African food crisis. From the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as well as private voluntary organizations like Mennonite Central Committee the news is the same: Another famine is occurring in Africa.

What is the extent of the famine? How is it related to drought and poverty? What responses are most appropriate?

Ten years ago a disastrous drought descended on northern Africa, stretching from the Sahel to Ethiopia. An estimated 300,000 people died in the ensuing famine.

Today northern Africa is again afflicted by drought and famine. And people living in the southern African nations of Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique watched their crops wither for the second year.

Jim Shenk, MCC worker in Mozambique, is a project consultant for the Christian Council of Mozambique. He reported, "The hunger situation caused by prolonged drought and (opposition guerrilla) activities in Mozambique has reached dramatic proportions. In fact it is much more serious than had earlier been known."

Shenk visited several provinces affected by drought with top government officials in October 1983. According to their assessments, hundreds of people there are dying from hunger daily.

Drought is often blamed for the tragic famine occurring in Mozambique and other African countries. But drought is not the only or even the primary cause of hunger in Africa. A recent article in the *Christian Science Monitor* states, "Drought has compounded the severe economic situation of the African continent which was already dented by the world recession. Fluctuating exchange rates, falling commodity prices and high interest rates have all taken their toll on Africa. As a result, revenues are down. Debts are up. Development projects are either on hold or have been tossed out the window."

*A destroyed tank at the roadside in Uganda is silent testimony to the destruction caused by spending money for arms rather than human needs.*

In a recent report, MCC Africa co-secretaries Nancy Heisey and Tim Lind write that military conflict in many countries is still another major cause for hunger. Four countries of seven singled out by the UN as facing serious food emergencies—Angola, Chad, Ethiopia and Mozambique—are involved in internal armed conflict. The government of Chad spends $22 million per year on the military, twice what they spend on education and seven times the health budget. Ethiopia spends 11 percent of its gross national product on the military.

The drought and resulting famine 10 years ago in the Sahel and Ethiopia called dramatic attention to another problem that ecologists had identified much earlier: the problem of human exploitation of fragile arid lands. Deforestation and overburdening the carrying capacity of arid lands can lead to increasing drought and desertification.

The cures for desertification have been known for some time. They consist of reversing the process and enabling biological recovery of environmental conditions. But corrective measures are expensive.

Although it is true that drought in Africa is caused to some extent by changing weather patterns, it is also true that human activities play a significant role. Appropriate responses to the African drought can be made.

First, it is essential that Christians in the developed world provide emergency food resources immediately to those in need. Governments and private voluntary agencies like MCC need to cooperate and respond to the crisis quickly.

Second, more diligent work must be done to alleviate the long-range, less visible root causes of underdevelopment. Help is needed to reverse the process of desertification. Farming systems that combine food production, forestry and animal husbandry and that preserve soil fertility as they boost output, must be encouraged.

Finally, a comprehensive approach to development, including integrated programs in health care, household water supplies, education, agriculture, forestry and family planning, is essential in the long run. Policy changes in international finance and economics are also needed if food and famine crises are to be prevented in the future. *Art Meyer*


## Field education opening

**The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries** seek applications for the position of director of field education, **beginning July 1, 1984.** Duties include equipping pastors for the supervision of ministry students.

Apply with resume to:
Jacob Elias, Dean
3003 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46517.

**About 60 people** attended the official opening and fund raising breakfast for the regional office of Shalom Counselling Services at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ont., on Dec. 3, 1983. This is the second area office of Shalom. The first one opened in St. Catharines, Ont., in October 1982. Shalom Counselling Services is a program of Mennonite Central Committee (Ontario).

**Military conflicts** pitting different ethnic and political groups against each other continue to make life difficult for people in the Horn of Africa. For another year the rains have failed, leaving hunger and sickness instead of rejoicing over the year-end harvests. Approximately 300,000 Ugandan refugees live in southern Sudan. In August, Mennonite Central Committee workers in Sudan requested a large shipment of beans for the refugees. MCC is now purchasing and shipping 100 tons of beans valued at $67,000.

*Ugandan refugees*

# Church planting: Should MCC be involved?

Winnipeg (MCCC)—An MCC Manitoba-supported Vietnamese-Chinese church is putting four Manitoba Mennonite conferences—the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Evangelical Mennonite Conference and the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference—into the same boat.

The church, which was chartered on Dec. 4, 1983, has been receiving financial assistance from MCC Manitoba since 1982, when MCC Manitoba and the Mennonite Brethren Bible College jointly supported the congregation's pastor, James Duong. In May 1983, MCC Manitoba assumed full responsibility for Duong's salary. Duong has been serving full time as pastor of the 26-member church since that time.

Under the terms of the proposal, Duong's salary will be paid for by contributions from MCC Manitoba and the four conferences. MCC Manitoba will give $8,000; the General Conference and the Mennonite Brethren are being invited to give $5,000 each; and the Evangelical Mennonite and Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference are being asked to provide $1,000 apiece. The proposal will find the church receiving assistance from May until April 1985.

Reaction to the proposal from the four conferences is positive. The Evangelical Mennonite and Evangelical Mennonite Mission conferences have already decided to support the congregation; the General Conference and the Mennonite Brethren executive committees have endorsed the proposal and will recommend its support to their annual meetings.

The decision to involve the four conferences arises from MCC Manitoba's discomfort with church planting. "MCC isn't supposed to plant churches," says MCC Manitoba director Jake Letkemann. "Our constituency hasn't given us that mandate."

MCC Manitoba involvement with the congregation began after MCC Manitoba had helped Mennonite churches in Manitoba sponsor 1,300 Southeast Asian refugees between 1980 and 1982. "If we cared enough to bring them here," says Ernie Braun, the MCC Manitoba representative on a five-person committee which advises and supports Duong, "then we have to care enough about their spiritual needs." Soon after helping the churches to bring the refugees to Manitoba, MCC Manitoba was encouraged to promote a spiritual ministry for them. "It was soon obvious that they could benefit more from a service in their own language," says Letkemann, adding that MCC Manitoba was also concerned to provide spiritual ministry to refugees who arrived in Canada through government or private sponsorship.

The MCC Manitoba sponsored ministry got under way when Duong came to Manitoba from Prince George, B.C., where he had been involved in an MCC B.C.-sponsored ministry to refugees in that city. Duong came to Canada from Vietnam in 1979 and worked with refugees in Prince George in 1980-81. When lack of jobs forced many refugee families to leave Prince George, Duong and his wife, Rebecca, decided to come to Winnipeg to study at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College. He worked part time with MCC Manitoba in 1981-82 but decided to serve full time in 1983-84 because, as he says, "the needs were just too great."

"We knew from the beginning that James' ministry would result in a church," says Letkemann, reflecting on Duong's enthusiasm and abilities. "That made us uncomfortable—MCC usually doesn't plant churches. But the need was there, and we were in a position to meet it."

The result is a growing congregation of 40 people who meet Sunday afternoons in the Winnipeg Home Street Church.

The birth of the congregation has brought a concern to the fore: Should MCC be involved in church planting? "We approve MCC's initiative," says John H. Neufeld, moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, "but MCC is not a church planting agency. It is the relief and development arm of the Mennonite churches." Edwin Plett, moderator of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Manitoba, agrees. "People should be won for Christ wherever MCC works," he says, "but MCC should ask a conference to pick up any church planting responsibilities which arise."

Others share those opinions. John Epp, moderator of Manitoba's Mennonite Brethren Conference, says that "MCC is more than just handing out a cup of cold water—it is to bring people to Christ." James Nikkel, director of evangelism for the Canadian Mennonite Brethren conference, shares that "all that MCC does should point to church planting." Churches which result from MCC work should, he says, align with a conference.

MCC Manitoba is, according to Letkemann, happy to turn responsibility over to the conferences. This has prompted a second concern—can the conferences work together? John H. Neufeld thinks that this can be a pilot project which may lead to more inter-Mennonite cooperation in Manitoba. "Sometimes God leads us in directions we might otherwise not have taken," he adds. Edwin Plett feels that MCC Manitoba has done the right thing in turning the project over to the conferences but thinks that the conferences should now decide among themselves who will assume full responsibility for the church.

Ken Neufeld says that the whole proj-

**"A Secular Critique** of Development" by Tom Franklin of Private Agencies Collaborating Together, New York; "A Biblical Critique of Development" by Tom Sine of World Concern, Seattle; and "MCC and Development" by Edgar Stoesz, associate executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee were three presentations that served as structure for a one-day development seminar in Akron, Pa., Dec. 15, 1983. Issues that received considerable discussion included how to encourage formation of basic Christian communities as a pattern for change and how to develop true accountability to Third World partners.

*Participants in development seminar*

**A Canadian Indian chief** has asked Pope John Paul II to speak out in favor of native Indians' rights and meet with Indian leaders when he visits Canada next fall. "Even now in the 1980s, our people in Canada are living in Third World conditions and we wanted the pope to know," said Chief Billy Diamond of the Cree tribe.

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ect has been good for inter-Mennonite dialogue, but believes that one conference should take full charge of the church. "If the church is a success story," he says, "everyone will want ownership. But if it fails, who will want to be responsible?"

And what about the church itself? The members, all of whom are recent immigrants, have had little previous contact with Mennonites. They can't appreciate the differences between the conferences. "It's unfair to ask them to choose a conference," says John H. Neufeld. James Duong, the congregation's pastor, says that the church council hasn't made any decisions about affiliation but thinks that the church will likely be independent, with close ties to all of the supporting conferences. The church will require support from outside for a few years yet, he adds.

All of the conference representatives and MCC Manitoba agree that questions of affiliation and church-planting responsibility are minor issues when compared with the need to help this small congregation grow. "We have a responsibility for the people we brought to Canada," says Ernest Wiebe, a member of the advisory committee. "That spiritual responsibility is our foremost concern." *John Longhurst*


MTS

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8. **SWISS MENNONITE HERITAGE** (SOLD OUT) **(with Oberemmergau)** — Dr. Delbert Gratz
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**The Saskatoon Mediation Services** opened Oct. 1, 1983, after 18 months of planning and preparations. Director of the office is Ken Funk of Laird, Sask. The office, operated jointly by MCC Saskatchewan and the John Howard Society, will mediate criminal complaints referred to it by Saskatoon courts. Mediation services brings victims of crime and offenders together to work out an appropriate method of reconciliation and, in some cases, compensation.

**Most video games** find the player destroying spaceships, people and alien creatures before they destroy the player. But a video game called "In search of the most amazing thing" centers around an adventure which involves cooperation instead of shoot-em-up destruction. The non-violent game, released by Spinnaker Software Corporation, instructs the player to find the most amazing things by cooperating with one of 25 different cultures on the game.

**A young adult winter retreat** will be held Feb. 10-12 at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center near Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Young adults ages 18-35, single and married, who want a weekend away to relax and recreate in body and spirit are invited to attend. The retreat will be led by Myrna Burkholder, staff person for Student and Young Adult Services of the Mennonite Board of Missions, and Harold and Ruth Yoder, pastoral leaders at University Mennonite Church in State College, Pa. For more information and registration, contact Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666, phone (412) 423-2056.

# RECORD

## WORKERS

*Jane E. Friesen* has been named executive assistant in charge of the Mennonite World Conference office in Lombard, Ill. She began her duties in June 1983. She will serve as registrar for the XI MWC Assembly in Strasbourg, France. In that capacity she will be in charge of processing and coordinating all registrations.

*Marsha Hooley* has been named to head a new group health department at Mennonite Mutual Aid, beginning Nov. 14, 1983. She will set up processes and systems to meet the unique needs of congregations and Mennonite institutions.

*Marlo Kauffman* of the Mennonite Mutual Aid staff has been promoted to the position of retirement services manager for MMA, effective Oct. 31. He will be responsible to develop or modify MMA's retirement plans to meet the needs for retirement income among Mennonites.

*Neil* and *Kristi Rowe Miller*, Assembly Church, Goshen, Ind., have begun three-year assignments with MCC in Haiti working in agriculture, community development and health promotion. Neil previously served with MCC in Haiti in the same position. He has a bachelor's degree in biology and tropical agriculture from Goshen (Ind.) College. Kristi has a bachelor's degree in nursing from Goshen College. His parents are William and Phyllis Miller of Goshen; hers are J. Otis and Wilma Rowe of Blantyre, Malawi.

*Frank C. Peters* will be visiting instructor at Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., for its second semester. He is past president of Wilfred Laurier University and has two earned doctorates, in psychology and theology.

*Millers*

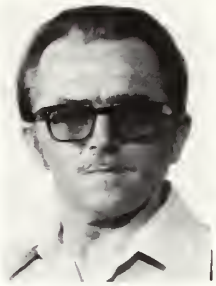
*Rudy A. Regehr*, Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, has been named executive secretary for the Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, effective in February. He has served as registrar and business manager of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg.

*Frank* and *Susan Sawatzky*, Blumenorter Church, Rosetown, Man., have completed a three-year term in Mexico as COM missionaries. Their service included working with the Mennonite Church at Steinreich. Frank was the leading minister there and part-time instructor at the Adult Christian Training Centre. Susan taught an adult Sunday school class, assisted with midweek Bible study and visitation, and served as hostess.

*Meribeth Sprunger*, secretary for mission communications for COM since August 1981, has resigned from that position effective this summer. She hopes to pursue graduate studies.

*Sophie Tiessen*, Sherbrooke Church, Vancouver, has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment as secretary in the overseas department at MCC Canada in Winnipeg.

*Barb Waltner*, Salem Church, Freeman, S.D., will work in a voluntary service position as an administrative assistant in MCC's Immigration and Refugee Program in Akron, Pa. She last worked as a secretary in a Haitian social service agency in Miami with MCC. She has an associate's degree in secretarial services from Freeman Junior College. Her parents are Robert and Cleva Waltner of Freeman.



*F. Sawatzky*

*S. Sawatzky*

*Jon Warkentin*, Southside Fellowship, Elkhart, Ind., has begun a nine-month term with MCC in construction in Honduras. He previously served with MCC in earthquake reconstruction in Guatemala. He has a bachelor's degree in sociology from Goshen (Ind.) College. His parents are Otto and Louetta Warkentin of Fort Wayne, Ind.

*David* and *Arlene Wiens*, Akron (Pa.) Church, have begun 2½-year voluntary service assignments with MCC in Harlan, Ky. He will work in a community center there; she will be a nursing instructor at Southeast Community College in Cumberland, Ky. David has a master's degree in social work from Marywood College, Scranton, Pa., and a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College. Arlene has a master's degree in nursing from the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and a bachelor's degree in nursing from Albright College, Reading, Pa. Her parents are Ivan Weaver of Womelsdorf, Pa., and the late

**A coalition of 26** Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups has asked President Reagan's commission on hunger not to ask churches to assume responsibility for feeding the poor. "Religious groups simply do not have the resources to meet the widespread need in this nation," Paul Kittlaus, chairman of the Washington-based Interfaith Action for Economic Justice, said in testimony prepared for delivery at a public hearing of the hunger panel held in Atlanta. "More important, they should not be asked to do so."

**Nuclear power** may be a "dying business," according to a study by the World Watch Institute. Once hailed as the cheap power source of the future, nuclear facilities are now more expensive than coal-fired plants. "Nowhere is nuclear power economical compared to investment in improved energy efficiency," the study said.

**A number of communities** are developing home-sharing programs to help senior citizens reduce individual housing costs, alleviate responsibility for household chores and foster a family-like environment, reports Cornell University in its Consumer Close-Ups.

*Wienses*

Minerva Weaver. His parents are Agatha and Henry Wiens of Wernersville, Pa.

*Barbara Willems*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., has begun a three-year assignment as assistant executive secretary of Peace Section for MCC. She has a bachelor's degree in history and literature from Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College and a master's degree in history from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her parents are Edwin and Enes Willems of Lodi, Calif.

## Items wanted

**Columbia Bible Institute** wishes to acquire by donation or purchase the following items:

1. Back copies of minutes of the annual meetings of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia
2. Back copies of minutes of the annual meetings of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada
3. A revised edition of the *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*.

Anyone having these items please contact:
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**Especially for Canadian readers . . .**

# Two things

# that these people have in common:

## Hunger. . . and the 1983-84 MCC Canada Food Drive.

Civil war in Lebanon and Guatemala, drought in Kampuchea People in Lebanon have been driven from homes and jobs and cannot support themselves. Thousands of Guatemalan families are fatherless because of civil war. The monsoon rains came late to Kampuchea this year, and people will be hungry. MCC wants to give canned meat to refugees in Lebanon, daily meals to widows and children in Guatemala and rice to drought-stricken people in Kampuchea.

Amount needed: $300,000

## The MCC Canada Food Drive December 1 to March 31

Contributions can be sent to the nearest provincial MCC office.

*Bessie and Willis Nussbaum*

Photo by Ron Meyer/White Eyes Design

## *"If you drive a nail through a board, you can pull the nail out, but it's awfully hard to get rid of that hole."*

Sometimes it seemed to Willis Nussbaum that life kept driving nails into him. His aging mother Lydia had depended on him ever since he was old enough to work. At times the income from his painting business barely took care of both her and his growing family.

Willis turned to Social Security when Lydia's medical bills began piling up . . . but because she hadn't earned much, she couldn't get Medicare. Because Lydia owned a house, welfare couldn't help, either.

When Lydia died last year, and the final expenses loomed over Willis' head, his congregation helped out with a gift of over $1500. And . . . through the work of his congregational representative . . . **Willis received a Burial Expense Grant from Mennonite Mutual Aid.**

"I appreciate the extra help MMA gave," says Willis. "They were under no obligation to help pay for Mother's funeral—but I gladly accepted the gift. I've seen how kind the church, and MMA, can be."

**Congregations across the country can help "mend the holes" in their members' lives**, because of your participation with MMA.

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## Critical of city article

I am an urban Mennonite Christian who found much objectionable in "Help God Visit the Cities" (Nov. 22, 1983, issue).

The title was absurd. When has God been absent from the city? If we feel him absent there, then it is due to our failure to recognize his presence.

The article perpetuates a misrepresentative and offensive depiction of the city. City is portrayed as a "bad neighborhood," a place that needs to be fixed before it is a viable place for human habitation. Further, the city is out there only as an object of mission. To their credit, Miller and Sider admit that the church has espoused an anti-urban bias. Unfortunately, they fail to challenge us to reformulate our thought beyond that debilitating bias.

The implicit message is that we need to save city people from themselves (a misguided assertion both in theological and missional terms). The relationship of the Mennonite church to the city is a subject-object relationship. This helps explain the historic and current paternal-colonial relations with city "mission" churches. Cities and city people are not objects for rural-suburban mission and analysis. The veracity of the work done in this area is questionable until the relationship changes to an authentic subject-subject relationship which assumes involvement via our full participation in city life. What the city does not need are more "rural messiahs" hoping to win the damnable city to God.

Sider and Miller argue that ". . . we exegete the city as well as the Bible . . . learning all we can about urban dynamics and social systems in order to understand the systemic evils which oppress people." My sense is that what Mennonites are uncomfortable with and unfairly critical of is the scale of urban institutions, not their essential character. After all, institutions and folkways/conventions serve a necessary role in structuring our common life. Unfortunately, within the Mennonite scheme of things, rural and suburban institutions/conventions define the right context for the church.

The Mennonite church rarely consults its urban expertise, especially those who for some years have been in ministry in and explorers of the urban context. Too often, out of pride, naivete or both, we commit our energies and resources to reinventing the wheel in the city. We must develop the humility and openness to resources that allow consultation with other denominations, particularly those successful at developing models of church in the city. (There exist few successful models of urban church within Mennonitism.) Perhaps it is also time to not pay as careful heed to rural and especially urban spokespersons for the city so that we might hear the authoritative work on the city from the city.

God is very present in the city, if we but have ears to hear and eyes to see in the city. *Richard D. Buterbaugh, 5052 N. Leavitt, Chicago, IL 60625*

Dec. 12

## Hopefully we can learn

Seeing in the Dec. 6, 1983, issue the article "Executive Committees Adopt Statement on Homosexuality" and Mark Lawson's letter "Issue Needs Dialogue" together, it saddened me to realize that the movement for censure had come as a response to a gay person serving in ministry and being affirmed for the quality of that service. While some would seem to deny God's gifting of gay people, the issue for me is whether our Mennonite churches will choose to *use* the gifts of gay people or will choose to deprive themselves of these gifts.

Hopefully we can learn again in our own day the lesson of Peter and the sheet (Acts 10) and not continue to call "unclean" (as the gentiles had been to Peter) another group of God's beloved human beings. *Frank R. Trnka, 2105 27th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406*

Dec. 14

## Scripture and scholarship

I appreciated the statement on homosexuality adopted by the executive committees of the Pacific District and Southwest Conference. It acknowledges the clear teaching of Scripture and reflects a redemptive attitude toward those who are living in this sin. This position takes issue with statements set forth in the Bethlehem '83 Workbook. In "On Human Sexuality," e.g., lines 47-51 state that the Bible is not helpful regarding some modern sexual experiences, but modern studies in science, medicine and human behavior will help us out. Lines 570-572 tell us that Paul was not aware of the difference between homosexual practice and orientation. Such statements claim that modern science knows more than the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures.

Having served in the educational field for over 40 years, I have come to realize that the simple faith of eighth-grade-level believers exceeds that of our skeptical PhDs who seek to destroy faith in biblical authority by stating that the Bible had its place in the culture of its day, but "any modern, educated person now sees it as relative and limited in many respects" (p. 166 in *Perils of Professionalism*, edited by Donald Kraybill and Phyllis Good, Herald Press). Such a position is both heretical and dangerous. God's people within Mennonite churches must take their stand against that which is aimed at destroying our historic faith. *Harold D. Burkholder, 520 N. Main St., Elbing, KS 67041*

Dec. 20

## Neglects Soviet missiles

I read with much interest William Keeney's article in *The Mennonite* of Dec. 20, 1983, entitled "Euromissles for Christmas." Keeney writes in a sprightly way and is always a pleasure to read. However, I feel that in his discussion of American-based missles in Europe he overstresses certain factors and neglects others.

Primarily, I believe that he neglects to stress the fact that the Western Europeans decided to deploy cruise and Pershing II missles in Europe in response to *Soviet* missles targeted on them in Eastern Europe (i.e. Russian SS 20s). The Russians could have reduced the number of these missles in Eastern Europe and the West could not have deployed its missles. At least, this is the position of the Reagan administration and affected European governments (cf. Britain, West Germany).

I do agree with one point stressed by Keeney. The introduction of new missles on both sides brings possible nuclear disaster closer. There is less room for error. Pershing II missles especially are very accurate and only minutes away from their targets in the Soviet Union. The answer, I think, is for us to urge the United States to redouble its efforts to get START talks started again in the hope of stopping future deployments by both superpowers. *Ron Heacock, Plumsteadville, PA 18949* Dec. 20

## Address correction

Sorry for the error in our "Letters" (Dec. 6, 1983, issue, p. 595). The correct address for Harry J. Loewen is 1500 5th St., A 12, Coralville, IA 52241.

# Pauingassi now is a mission to others

*Neil Unrau*

The Seaulteaux (or Northern Ojibway) Indian settlement of Pauingassi is generally regarded as the most isolated community in Manitoba and the last one to come into direct contact with the outside world. Until the 1950s the only outsiders who reached this area about 175 air miles northeast of Winnipeg and 10 miles west of the Manitoba-Ontario border were fur traders and the occasional Methodist and United Church missionary.

Now it can look on three decades of tense and often frustrating struggles to understand and respond to the outside world. But it can also claim at least one success story—the development of a self-sustaining, self-governing Mennonite congregation.

The story of that development is an important one; it is one clear example of a North American aboriginal group taking some degree of ownership for the Christian message they have received and seeking to adapt that message to their own cultural situation.

The story began when Native Ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (then known as Mennonite Pioneer Mission and sponsored by the Bergthaler Mennonite Church) sent Henry and Elna Neufeld to Pauingassi in September 1955. The Neufelds had worked in northern Manitoba for several years as teachers before responding to the MPM invitation and the direct request for help from the community.

Henry recalls the words of Alex Owen, a community leader. "Our way of life in the past has been very adequate for us, but for tomorrow our children will have to meet new demands.

"They will have to know English in order to communicate. We invite you to come and live with us, teach our children and have services with us."

During the next 15 years the Neufelds labored diligently, starting the first day school in the community despite the unexpected opposition of the federal Department of Indian Affairs, initiating a local sawmilling project and assisting individuals in every way possible. Eventually they were also able to stimulate the development of a slowly growing church group. The first three members of the church were baptized on Feb. 27, 1966.

The Pauingassi congregation could have survived in this way for a long time, secure in the assurance that the Neufelds would be able to assist them in all aspects of community and spiritual development. However, by the summer of 1968 Henry and Elna were asked by MPM to phase out of the Pauingassi ministry and transfer to the nearby community of Little Grand Rapids to work with another church group which had already received some assistance from Pauingassi Christians.

The Pauingassi congregation pleaded with the Neufelds to postpone their move for two years. Henry and Elna agreed to stay long enough to help the church develop its own leadership.

During this time four men who had already assisted Henry in his pastoral ministry stepped forward to take on increasing responsibilities. These four—St. John Owen, Jacob Owen, Spoat Owen and David Owen—faced the future with a great deal of apprehension but with the growing certainty that the church could carry on.

As St. John reflected in March 1969, "When you first referred to [your departure], I expressed my feeling. You did not say you were leaving, but you inferred it. I was much in distress and wanted to consider the whole matter. I feel there are many things you help us with here.

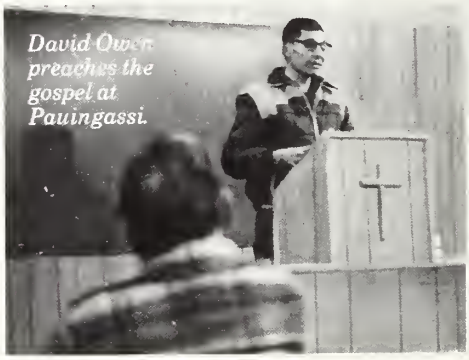
"After considering this for some time, I felt peace in my heart. I did not feel this out of myself; the Lord gave me peace over distress.

"You also asked me about a replacement. I feel we have grown in grace and with the help of the Holy Spirit will carry on. I am thankful for the way he has helped me in distress."

After the Neufelds left in 1970, Vic and Norma Funk lived in the community for four years. Unlike their predecessors, the Funks were not viewed by the community as the major leaders of the church. Their role was to facilitate, advise and assist at the direction of the local leaders.

By 1972 it had become apparent that the four men who had promised to carry on after the Neufelds were indeed doing so. It would only be fitting to ordain these leaders to the ministry in the Pauingassi Church and thereby affirm them in their work.

Vic noted in a 1972 report to MPM, ". . . as I watched these men work in the church, their love and concern as they counseled fellow members and those seeking salvation, I realized they were doing everything that a minister or pastor usually does. They were the ministers here, not I. I felt that we as the larger church body should officially acknowledge their service by ordination."



*David Owen preaches the gospel at Pauingassi.*

The ordination service held in February of that year did not bring a dramatic change to the life of the church, but it showed the congregation and the outside world that these church leaders took their responsibilities seriously.

Since the Funks left in 1974, the church kept growing, encouraged and supported by regular visits from Henry Neufeld, who is still welcomed as "the one who shared the Word with us and gave us the authority to continue on our own."

The four leaders continue to minister to the congregation and the whole community. St. John has been given the

*Jacob Owen, now in his 80s, gladly spends time with a granddaughter even as he receives us for a visit.*

authority to officiate at communions, baptisms, weddings, funerals, etc. While initially insecure about the weight of this responsibility, he has now become much more comfortable with his role. The other three assist in preaching, teaching and counseling community members.

The activities of these men extend beyond the immediate community as well. Jacob frequently visits several other isolated communities in northern Ontario and keeps in touch with a number of the Indian Mennonite churches established by the Northern Light Gospel Mission. Spoat enjoys meeting the southern Mennonite constituency and has represented the Pauingassi church at several annual Conference of Mennonites in Canada gatherings, as well as some of the General Conference Indian mission celebrations in the United States. David does not travel as much as the others but has influenced many Indian Christians through his Saulteaux recordings of Bible passages.

*When the first church burned down some years ago, the present Pauingassi Mennonite Church building was built to replace it.*

*St. John Owen, left, is glad to see Henry Neufeld pay a visit to his home.*

Like other congregations, the Pauingassi church is not without problems and frustrations. A major concern is the lack of young people in the church. Leaders must seek ways of making the gospel exciting and relevant to the younger generations.

Church leaders also recognize the need to prepare for and respond to the social changes presently sweeping across the community. The influence of television, first introduced to the area in 1983, is not being felt. Pauingassi is also moving toward achieving its own band status rather than remaining as one subgroup of the Little Grand Rapids Band. This move promises more self-government eventually, but some immediate tension and community uncertainty as local leaders struggle with new and unfamiliar situations.

One of the biggest issues for the congregation is the difficulty of communicating with the rest of the Mennonite constituency. Jacob is the only one of the four church leaders who is relatively fluent in English. For the foreseeable future, any meaningful contact with the congregation must be mediated through someone who, like Henry Neufeld, is proficient in the local Saulteaux dialect.

Despite the setbacks of the past and the problems of today and tomorrow, the Pauingassi Mennonite Church continues to survive and grow. The leaders are proud that the interdenominational strife which has marked so many northern communities is not evident here. As the only church in the community, the Mennonite congregation provides a focus for local unity rather than division.

The congregation continues to view itself as part of the worldwide Mennonite family and to adapt the ideals and values of this family to their own particular setting and cultural background.

# Urban ministry yes, urban future no

*S. Roy Kaufman*

I consider myself anti-urban but believe in urban ministry. To that extent I approve of the Miller and Sider article, "Help God Visit the Cities" (Nov. 22, 1983, issue). But I am disturbed by the misconceptions in their rationale for urban ministry.

The fundamental misconception is *theological.* The history of the city is rooted in the human rebellion against God, as Jacques Ellul eloquently points out in *The Meaning of the City.* Enoch, Cain's city in Genesis 4, represents Cain's attempt to dwell apart from God when he resists God's sentence to be a wanderer after he murdered Abel.

Is it historical accident that Jesus lived in the country and used agrarian imagery in his teaching? Is it without significance that the climax of Jesus' life came with his challenge to the religious and political powers that rule the city? The city as the center of political, economic and mercantile exploitation is graphically indicated in the account of Babylon's fall (Revelation 18).

As a person committed to rural values and the rural way of life, I'm tired of being told that God is going to make me live in a city in the new creation. The imagery of Revelation 21 is that of a city, but as Ellul points out (pp. 183ff.), it is not patterned on an earthly urban conglomerate. Miller and Sider also ignore the imagery of a garden in the midst of the city, reminiscent of Genesis 2—a river, a fruitful tree (Revelation 22:1-5). I doubt God will sentence rural people to an urban eternity anymore than he will force urbanites to a rural paradise.

A second misconception in the article is *sociological.* To them, urban life represents an ideal human community, "many people living in loving proximity and peace" (p. 554). Cities are the "result of human nature" but, instead of the gregarious human nature creating cities, it is the greedy and idolatrous human nature. I find it incredible to see the city held up as an ideal human community. Have I not always heard that when someone wishes to escape community, he or she flees to the anonymity of the city? In the countryside it is impossible to escape community. At least that is what we are told. The alternative to the city is in farms and villages.

A third fallacy in the article is *ecological.* They assert that "city and country can live in a happy symbiotic relationship" (p. 554). What does the city contribute to the country? Pollution? Its dehumanizing consumer goods? Its pseudo-culture beamed out on TV screens? Its industrial output which destroys the earth and demolishes rural communities? A symbiotic relationship implies mutual welfare.

*We must minister to cities but not at the expense of denying the realities.*

The city exists because there is a countryside, but not vice versa. The city has no future, ecologically speaking. The city is dying and will die.

In the end, human life on earth depends upon the land. Without a viable relation to the land, no living creature or system may live long. The city has no such relation. It only remains to be seen if the city in its death throes will destroy the countryside as well or if sufficient sanity in the human family will be found to turn our backs on the urban dreams for wealth and power which have brought us where we are today.

The city developed when some few were able to live off the work of many in the country by ruling over them. City related to country as master to slave. Can such relationships be "happy" or "symbiotic"?

Yes, to urban ministry. But let us also honestly acknowledge the fate of urban life. If the Lord tarries, and if human life is to continue on earth, it will not be in the urban/industrial/technological/commercial conglomerates. Human life must be centered in small, diversified, self-sufficient human communities which may exist within the city, but which have nothing to do with the city per se. How can we appreciate the city when its structures cause the human needs to which we must minister?

Let's have urban ministry, but let's not justify it without facing the city as a place of human rebellion against God, a place of alienation from fellow humans, and a place not ecologically sustainable. Even in the city, let's advocate sustainable ways of life. Let's not exchange our rural heritage for the urban-industrial mess of pottage. Faithfulness in urban ministry must lead to the demise of the city.

Gandhi wrote in 1944, "There are two schools of thought current in the world. One wants to divide the world into cities and the other into villages. The village and city civilizations are totally different things." Earlier, in 1939, Gandhi wrote, "I suggest that if India is to evolve along non-violent lines it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them. . . . So must huge factories. . . . You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization. . . . Rural economy as I have conceived it, eschews exploitation altogether. You have to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent" (*MANAS, Box 32112, El Serento Station, Los Angeles, CA 90032, Oct. 26, 1983, p. 6*).

It is not Miller and Sider's call to urban ministry that I deplore. Their uncritical adulation of the urban phenomenon distresses me. Their implication of the irrelevance of our rural heritage of faith and life shocks and angers me. The proper symbiotic relationship is not between the city and the country, for the city by its very nature is always the exploiter to the country. The proper symbiotic relationship is between the urban poor and rural people, both of whom are exploited by the city.

*S. Roy Kaufman, Box 98, Pulaski, IA 52584, is pastor of the Pulaski Mennonite Church.*

# MEDITATION

## Breaking stride

It was a hot day to be jogging 12 miles. I had never run that far before. But when I passed the 10-mile mark I decided to push on and reach for 12 big ones. My feet hurt. My legs weighed 300 pounds. My lungs ached. As I moved into the final mile, a car slowed down beside me.

"Pardon me," she called. "Could you tell us where . . .?"

"I can't stop," I panted, and ran on.

It angered me. Couldn't they see I was giving my all to get somewhere? Didn't they know that you never interrupt a runner?

I made my 12-mile goal standing up. But victory tasted sour. I kept thinking of the people in the car and my refusal to stop. I began to compare myself to the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

It's easy to chase achievement, to be goal-oriented. "Don't bother me, I want to get this done before dinner." "Can't talk now, I'm in a hurry."

Obsession with success produces an inflexible pace. We pad down the road panting to those we pass, "I can't stop. I can't talk. I can't come. I can't help. I can't. . . ."

Many goals are worthy. Establishing and maintaining momentum is important. But the good can be twisted. Our programs and projects can keep us from people.

When Jesus set out for Jerusalem and the cross, he encountered many interruptions. He had good reason to run by. Again and again he stopped.

He stopped to reason with his critics. He stopped to bless the children. He stopped to plead with the rich young ruler. He stopped to talk with his friends. He stopped to help Bartimaeus. He stopped to have dinner with Zacchaeus.

And later, alone with his disciples, he stopped to wash their feet.

Breaking stride is what servanthood is all about. And we who follow Jesus have been called to serve those we encounter along the way. "I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).

*Roger Schoenhals*

## The Old Testament and Homer

Recently someone called to my attention the parallel between the story of David and Goliath in the Old Testament and that of the duel between Paris and Menelaus in Homer's *Iliad*. In both cases they sought to limit the warfare. In the latter case the victor would win Helen and there would follow a treaty of peace.

In both cases peace did not follow. In the case of Israel and the Philistines, the battle raged furiously after Goliath was killed. In the other case the Achaean Menelaus was the victor and was carried off a prisoner but was kidnapped and brought back to Troy and to Helen. This started the war all over and the Achaeans insisted on destroying Troy.

There seems to be no way to limit war as long as the battlefield is in the human heart and soul. But, "thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:57 KJV).

*Ward W. Shelly*

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To look at something old and discover something new is one of life's greateat pleasures. It speaks of new life, fresh ideas and wisdom waiting to be found.

This issue looks at some old experiences in Russia that have resulted in new life among believers there. We look at new thoughts about peace. Goliath comes to visit us. One of the oldest and most familiar Sunday school songs shows a creative freshness. A mission church now is a mission.

May these stimulating articles be invigorated by God's Spirit in you as you read them.


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# editorial

## *Listening is communicating too*

Remember the talk a couple of months back about the General Conference's General Board wanting to beef up communications and public relations?

Well, the whole thing's become serious business. Ideas have given way to meetings, which have been followed by professional consultation. On the assumption that the GB will OK a communications buildup in March, conference administrators have begun the painful task of slicing program to make way for the move within already constricted budgets.

The General Conference spends a sizable chunk of money each year on communications, subsidizing *The Mennonite* and *Der Bote*, supporting a Media Division, operating a news service, publishing scores of brochures, newsletters and reports, distributing promotional church bulletins and advertising, printing a yearly *Handbook of Information* and producing audiovisuals.

The yearly price tag to the conference for these comes to over $330,000. Considering that the total annual budget is in the vicinity of $5 million, that's about 6.5 percent—a fair portion, but far less than many organizations spend on similar activity.

The word "communication" assumes the sharing of information between at least two entities. In this case, they are the conference programs and their supporting constituency. What I've described above could be labeled "outbound" communication. It is communication from central offices in Newton, Kan. (which represent the church's commissions, boards, staff), to the congregations and church supporters.

If real communication between these two partners is to happen, the outbound signals must be answered by "inbound" messages. How does that part of conference communications happen? Certainly by delegate action and discussion at conferences. Secondly by church representation on commissions and boards. Thirdly by more informal contact (letters, telephone calls, personal visits) between congregations and conference staff or commission members.

An important problem here is that churchwide gatherings, which come too seldom anyway, and commission meetings are almost always dominated by prescribed agenda. There is so much ongoing business to do in so short a time that delegates, representatives and staff seldom get to sharing about what is happening at the grass roots.

If there is one theme that I've been hearing in all of our provinces and districts over the past triennium, it has been the need for the General Conference to become immersed in the task of evangelism. Evangelism with a capital E. A wholistic approach encompassing congregational and community evangelism, friendship evangelism, peace evangelism, aggressive church planting and (dare I mention it?) mass evangelism.

Members of the General Board spent the first several hours of their meetings last October riding the crest of the wave they had caught in Pennsylvania. Evangelism and church planting, many agreed, should be our highest priority for the '83-'86 triennium.

Yet when forced to look into the face of another year in which budgets might not be met, the board put action on those goals back on the shelf. Within just a few hours, they had decided instead to invest more in selling the conference to its own constituency.

Now GC structures are about to undergo some important changes to incorporate that decision. If we can move so quickly to reorganize in favor of improved outbound communications, why have we made almost no progress toward responding to inbound signals to shore up and expand our efforts in the area of evangelism? If the voices I've been hearing (is it only me?) over the last four years were heeded with half as much resolve, by now we would have at least doubled our current evangelism/church planting staff under the Commission on Home Ministries.

Our outbound communications do need better coordination. However, we as conference staff, board and commission members need to invest more in listening and responding to the voices of our churches, not in strengthening structures which too often lead to monologue and not dialogue. In return, the money crunch, which sparked this entire debate, might take care of itself.

Lack of congregational ownership in conference program, if it exists, is due more to our churches not being heard rather than to their not hearing enough. *Larry Cornies*

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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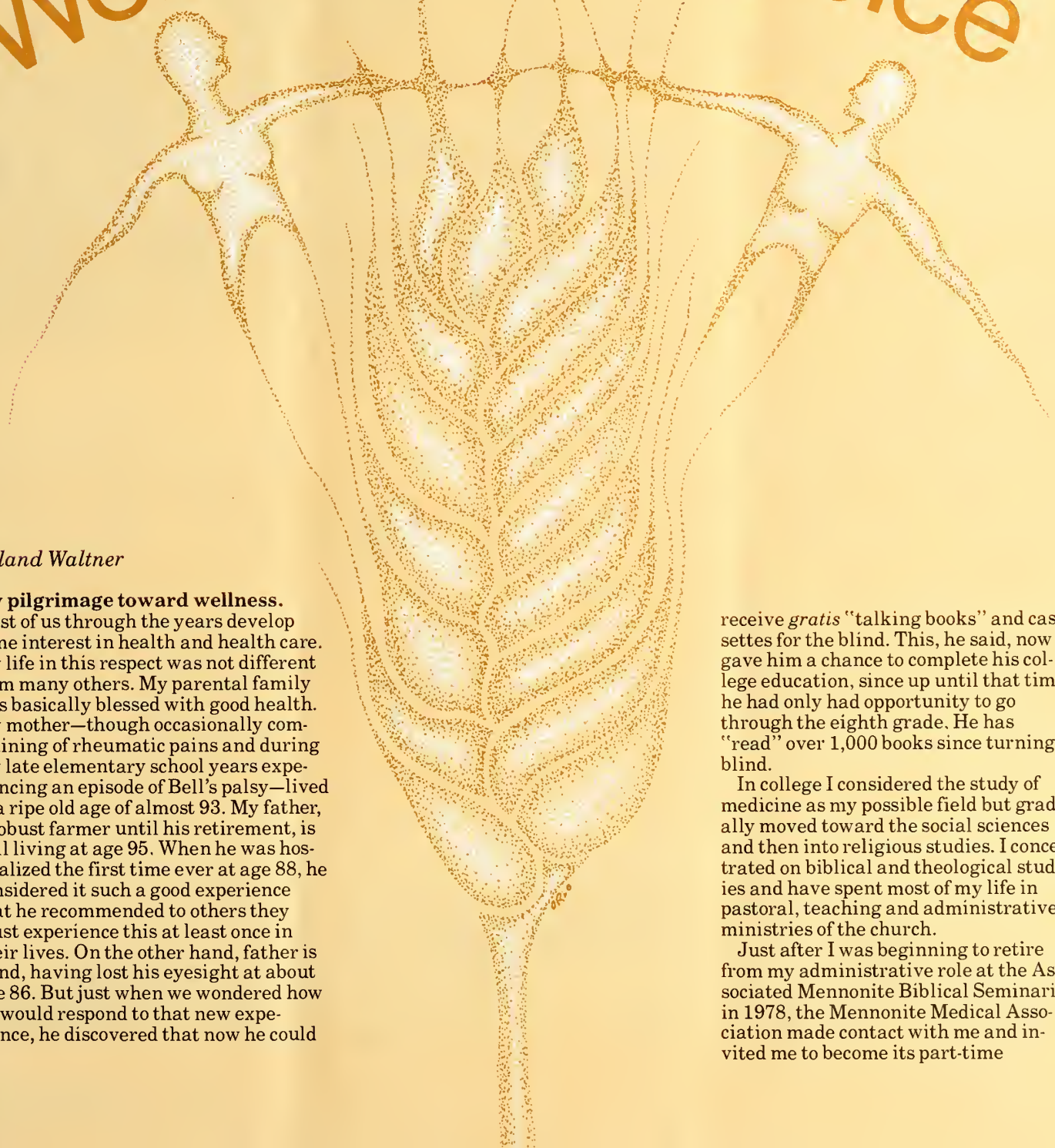
# Wellness is a choice



*Erland Waltner*

**My pilgrimage toward wellness.** Most of us through the years develop some interest in health and health care. My life in this respect was not different from many others. My parental family was basically blessed with good health. My mother—though occasionally complaining of rheumatic pains and during my late elementary school years experiencing an episode of Bell's palsy—lived to a ripe old age of almost 93. My father, a robust farmer until his retirement, is still living at age 95. When he was hospitalized the first time ever at age 88, he considered it such a good experience that he recommended to others they must experience this at least once in their lives. On the other hand, father is blind, having lost his eyesight at about age 86. But just when we wondered how he would respond to that new experience, he discovered that now he could receive *gratis* "talking books" and cassettes for the blind. This, he said, now gave him a chance to complete his college education, since up until that time he had only had opportunity to go through the eighth grade. He has "read" over 1,000 books since turning blind.

In college I considered the study of medicine as my possible field but gradually moved toward the social sciences and then into religious studies. I concentrated on biblical and theological studies and have spent most of my life in pastoral, teaching and administrative ministries of the church.

Just after I was beginning to retire from my administrative role at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in 1978, the Mennonite Medical Association made contact with me and invited me to become its part-time

executive secretary. This has represented for me a tremendously stimulating growing edge. It was in this context I began to observe John Bertsche, M.D., of Bloomington, Ill.—then president of the association—and his commitment to regular jogging, to disciplined eating habits and effective weight control. I began reading medical and nursing journals, had more contact with Mennonite Mutual Aid Association and became aware of their special interest in wellness.

One of the first conventions of the MMA after I began to attend dealt with wholistic health care. Through this I was put in touch with people like Granger Westberg and —by reading— with Kenneth Pelletier, John Sanford and others who have promoted the concept of wellness. About this same time I developed my own patterns of running and began to feel that it would be good if I could lose a few pounds. I knew that I had borderline high blood pressure with readings sometimes of 150/90, 147/93 and even up to 167/94. I cut salt intake and sugar intake and tried to count calories.

In the summer of 1982 my wife and I attended Project Renew led by Dr. Glen and Marilyn Miller. As part of this process I submitted to a datamation questionnaire, the results of which were fed into a computer which then yielded some projections on life expectancy for me. The computerized projections for me were disappointing and disturbing. Though I was then 68 years of age, I was given approximately another decade of life expectancy whereas my wife, Winifred, with a history of considerably more medical problems than I have had, was given a substantially longer life expectancy. This served as a major prod for me to begin a regimen which has changed some of our lifestyle patterns significantly. Winifred joined me in my effort, changing her cooking style markedly. My exercise pattern took on new seriousness. I began to think of this dimension as a part of responsible discipleship with reference to a stewardship of my body.

The results were clearly measurable. My blood pressure stabilized at 140/80. My weight went down over 12 pounds. It was fun to be able to pull in the belt three notches. More significant was a new sense of well-being with new zest and enthusiasm for whatever years God may choose to give. I am aware of how precarious and how annoying such

*". . . the Bible values health . . . it teaches an implicit positive theology of the human body and offers to us an invitation to live human life to the full."*

statements on my part can be. I risk sharing this experience in order to introduce further reflection on choosing wellness.

**What is wellness?** The term wellness may represent for some a new language to talk about health or wholeness. I confess I am not very fond of the word nor am I given to making fine distinctions between wellness and health as some writers do. The word "wellness" is in both *Webster's* and in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. It goes back at least to 1654 when it was spelled "wealnesse." That makes it almost as venerable as the King James Bible. Wellness then and now means essentially "the quality or state of being in good health."

But what is good health? Here we face a wide range of definitions. Henrik Blum (1974) speaks of: (1) The *medical model*, which defines health as "freedom from superimposed or unnatural influences." This approach looks for the causes and treatment of disease and has through the years made dramatic contributions. (2) The *preventive/public health model.* This is like the above, but its focus is on discovering and taking preventive measures against the diseases for which the medical model tries to provide appropriate treatment. (3) The *humanitarian/well-being model.* This is represented by such definitions as come from the World Health Organization which put human welfare in the middle, which work for the survival of infants and mothers, which are concerned about appropriate nutrition and sanitation.

4. The *economic model* defines health predominantly in terms of productivity in a work force. (5) The *super biologic systems* stress normal growth and development and functioning in physiological, psychological and sociological dimensions. (6) The *mental health model* promotes the pursuit of maximal capacity for self-realization of self-fulfillment. (7) The *ecological/species survival model* holds that humanity is not alone at the center but is part of an ecosystem of this universe which includes animals and plants and reminds us of the interdependence of the various dimensions of creation.

8. Blum's own definition is what he calls the *health planning model.* He says, "Health consists of the capacity of an organism (a) to maintain a balance appropriate to its age and social needs,

in which it is reasonably free from gross dissatisfaction, discomfort, disease or disability; (b) to behave in ways which promote the survival of the species as well as the self-fulfillment or enjoyment of the individual."

To speak of wellness or health then calls for an examination of our assumptions with reference to the nature and purpose of human life.

When we move on to consider Judeo-Christian perspectives, we begin to think of wellness or health in yet larger dimensions. We observe that the Bible values health, that it teaches an implicit positive theology of the human body and offers to us an invitation to live human life to the full.

In my study, the Old Testament concept of *shalom* has become basic. The term *shalom*—commonly translated "peace"—is much more than absence of war. I appreciate the way my colleague LeRoy Friesen, professor of peace studies at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, speaks of it. He says, "The word shalom is too big for anything in the English language. . . . In contrast to our own use of the word peace, which might mean the absence of war or some kind of inner tranquillity, the biblical term is an enormously expansive and comprehensive word. Wholeness might be the best one-to-one synonym, but even that is terribly inadequate. The word has to do with the totality of things and the relationship of all things, human and otherwise, in God's creation."

In the New Testament then, this concept of shalom finds its fulfillment and implementation in Jesus Christ, who said to us, "My peace (shalom) I give to you" (John 14:27); and of whom Paul wrote, "He (Jesus Christ) is our peace (shalom)" (Ephesians 2:14). John Pilch, in his book (*Wellness*, 1981) where he compares humanistic, Jewish and Christian perspectives, finally centers his understanding of wellness in Jesus, who said, "I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly/fully" (John 10:10). This fullness of life for which Jesus came is certainly more than physical wellness. In fact a full-orbed understanding of wellness from a Christian perspective includes not only physical and mental and emotional dimensions but also relational, environmental, ecological and spiritual dimensions.

*As individuals we may choose wellness by making the appropriate decisions concerning food that we eat, the exercise programs we implement, environmental choices we make, the specific body care we exercise and a discerning enlistment of professional services when we have need of these.*

**What is the nature of our choosing?** A philosophical/theological assumption we make is the reality of human freedom. It makes no sense to talk of mandate or choice unless freedom is a reality and not an illusion. Somewhere in the scheme of things, however limited our freedom may be politically or psychologically or physically, we have choices.

The Bible speaks a great deal about God choosing. God chose the people of Israel according to the Old Testament, and Jesus in one place says, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16).

The other great biblical dimension is human freedom. In Deuteronomy 30:19 we read, "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses, now choose life so that you and your children may live." Joshua 24:15, "Choose you this day whom you will serve, but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The implication of the prophetic ministry of the Old Testament and later the preaching and teaching of Jesus and the apostles is the possibility of choosing. The call to faith and repentance assumes that one can choose to believe and change.

In our lives we make our master choices—the choice of life partner, choice of life loyalty and choice of life occupation.

It is when we seek to apply the principle of human freedom to the area of health and wellness that we are easily caught in some troubling questions of determinism versus human responsibility. Theologically we struggle with the question whether God ever wills disease or illness and if so whether this is for our good or for our punishment.

Currently there is a refreshing emphasis on the responsibility of the individual for one's own health/wellness. It is not acceptable simply to blame God or the devil or our parents or our genes or our environment or our doctors for the state of our well-being. Illnesses are multifactoral in origin and there are some things we can choose to do which reduce the probability or the severity of human disease. This line of thinking can lead us to a trap into which the disciples had fallen when in John 9:2 they asked Jesus about the man who was born blind as to whether he had sinned or whether it was his parents who had

*Not so long ago, gasoline sold at 29.8 cents per gallon; then it was 29.8 cents per litre. Both days are long past. It is interesting to think that we may have moved toward wellness care more readily because of expensive living than we did because the Bible advocates an abundant life for each of us.*

sinned. Jesus, you recall, rejected that approach to an explanation of human suffering, but moved on to minister to the man's need.

Biblical understandings of wellness do include the possibility of some kind of human loss or suffering and that people with handicaps may indeed often exhibit a state of wellness which exceeds substantially that of people who may have relatively good physical health. Our concept of God's wholeness for us must embrace also our human brokenness. John Pilch's emphasis that an awareness of the meaning of life and a commitment to healthy attitudes toward whatever our limitations may be, expressed in purposeful and zestful living within the framework of what circumstances have made possible for us, may well be more important than a healthy body. Wellness in this perspective is so much more than robust physical functioning.

**What are the implications for congregational life?** The Mennonite Health Association senses that congregations as congregations need to develop a greater awareness of health concerns. We remember the sick in our prayers and encourage pastoral visits. If there is death, we as communities participate in funerals and in a ministry to those grieving. Broadly, however, we have turned health concerns over to the professionals and to our health-care institutions. Illness is often viewed as a private matter between a person and his or her physician. Dramatic contributions have come to the health of our people through the medical system. However, this system has also become an expensive part of our life. Moreover, the medical model focused on disease rather than on health. As Willard Krabill, M.D., pointed out at San Antonio in March 1981, the tendency on the part of the medical profession has been to limit the approach to health and health care to a biomedical/mechanistic view instead of a wholistic view (see *Mennonite Medical Messenger*, July-September 1981, pp. 11ff).

The newer emphasis on wholistic health care comes as a partial response to the gaps which have developed in the more conventional medical models. Wholistic health care has taken many different forms and there is no one model which is to be promoted above all others. One dimension of this new response, however, is to recognize that congregations may have a larger role in health and health care than before.

One of the purposes of Mennonite Health Association is to promote awareness and consciousness raising in congregations with reference to the propriety of becoming more concerned again with the total health of our members, including not only spiritual but emotional, mental and physical health. Dr. Glen and Marilyn Miller have been pioneers in this area with the development of Project Renew. The Mennonite Mutual Aid Association has developed some wellness brochures and a wellness manual which is recommended for use in local congregations to help raise awareness and implement programs of activity. The Mennonite Health Association is promoting the development of councils on congregational health concerns in each local congregation to guide and implement health concerns and activities.

**Conclusion.** As individuals we may choose wellness by making the appropriate decisions concerning food that we eat, the exercise programs we implement, environmental choices we make, the specific body care we exercise and a discerning enlistment of professional services when we have need of these.

Congregations as a whole or subgroups within congregations can become support communities in which we invite and encourage each other to make the right choices with reference to health and health care. My own experience has been that I was personally not strong enough to remain faithful in wellness activities. I needed the encouragement and support of others. That is probably true of most of us. •

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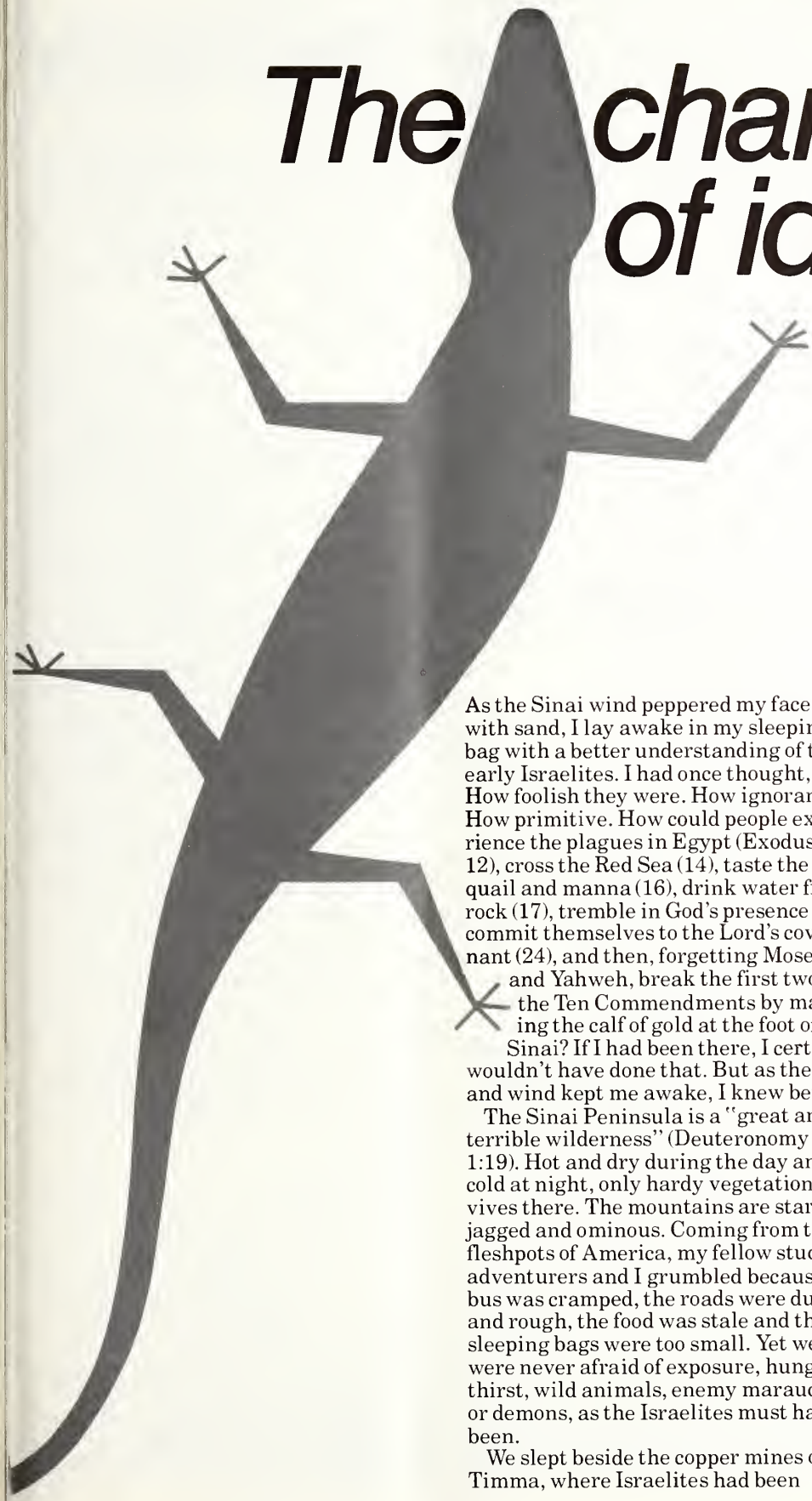
# The chameleon of idolatry

*Mark D. Stucky*



As the Sinai wind peppered my face with sand, I lay awake in my sleeping bag with a better understanding of the early Israelites. I had once thought, How foolish they were. How ignorant. How primitive. How could people experience the plagues in Egypt (Exodus 7-12), cross the Red Sea (14), taste the quail and manna (16), drink water from rock (17), tremble in God's presence (20), commit themselves to the Lord's covenant (24), and then, forgetting Moses and Yahweh, break the first two of the Ten Commendments by making the calf of gold at the foot of Mt. Sinai? If I had been there, I certainly wouldn't have done that. But as the sand and wind kept me awake, I knew better.

The Sinai Peninsula is a "great and terrible wilderness" (Deuteronomy 1:19). Hot and dry during the day and cold at night, only hardy vegetation survives there. The mountains are stark, jagged and ominous. Coming from the fleshpots of America, my fellow student adventurers and I grumbled because the bus was cramped, the roads were dusty and rough, the food was stale and the sleeping bags were too small. Yet we were never afraid of exposure, hunger, thirst, wild animals, enemy marauders or demons, as the Israelites must have been.

We slept beside the copper mines of Timma, where Israelites had been Egyptian slaves before the Exodus and where lie the remains of a temple to Hathor, the cow goddess. Hathor was one of the high gods of Egypt who was known, among other things, as the goddess of mining and of the Sinai. If people were in a frightening desert where they were cold, hot, hungry, thirsty, and if their leader disappeared on top of a mountain for more than a month, a *reasonable* thing for them to do in that era would be to turn to any local gods they knew.

The Israelites are not so hard to understand. They were people a lot like us.

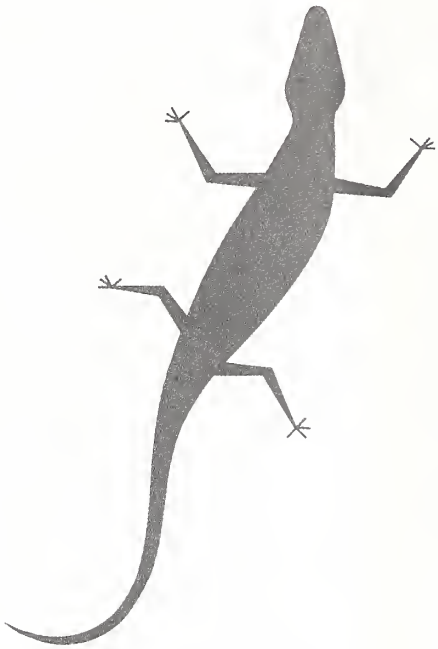
**The chameleon's character.** Although human nature has not changed much in 3,000 years, today we are too sophisticated to carve images of wood, cover them with gold and consider them divine beings. We think idolatry is no longer a relevant topic.

But did idolatry stop? Did the scientific era destroy it? No one in our culture bows down to handcarved sticks. The *form* is dead, but is the *essence*? Has idolatry only changed appearance like a chameleon changes colors? Has it changed colors to fit different backgrounds so that it can continue to eat and drink and multiply without being seen?

The theologian Paul Tillich defined "religion" as one's ultimate concern, or

in other words, what is supremely important, what is really real, what is worshiped, what must be had at the expense of anything else.

By this definition everyone has a religion—everyone has something supremely important to them. This definition also precludes two different kinds of religion: the ideal (what people say is their religion) and the practical (what it really is). Everyone worships something; it may be some sort of divine being, it may be themselves, money, sex or missile systems. Idolatry then can be defined as having an ultimate concern other than the true God, as loving something more than God.



**Webster's Ninth**

*cha • me • leon: 1. any of a group of Old World lizards with granular skin, prehensile tail, independently movable eyeballs, and unusual ability to change the color of the skin. 2. a fickle or changeable person or thing. 3. any of various American lizards capable of changing their color.*

*idol • a • try: 1. the worship of a physical object as a god 2. immoderate attachment or devotion to something.*

Idols are not necessarily bad in themselves. Long ago there was nothing inherently wrong with wood, stone, silver or gold; the attitude toward them was what shaped them into something they were never meant to be. Gold and wood became idols only when they were elevated above their proper position and worshiped. Thus, anything is a potential idol—anything at all—even good things.

**The chameleon's colors.** With what colors does the chameleon of idolatry hide in our society today? Witness the rainbow colors of our worship.

Some people worship the color of *romance*. Many movies, poems, songs and books say or imply that if you find romance, everything will be beautiful. But the fires of romance eventually cool.

Some worship the color of *money*. They will lie and cheat and do anything to get a few more dollars.

Some worship the color of *pleasure*. The '70s were called the "me decade," and many still chase hedonistic happiness. Who then cares for the poor, the blind and the maimed?

Some worship the color of *fashion*. They wear, drive, eat, do, see and hear the latest fads in order to be noticed or accepted.

Some worship the color of *weapons systems*. Some insist we need MX missiles, B-1 bombers, Trident missile subs, neutron bombs, chemical warfare capabilities and strengthened conventional forces. Never mind the costs.

Some worship the colors of *video games*, *Trans Ams*, *alcohol*, *drugs*, *TV*, *sex*, *technology*, *football* or *materialism*. The list could continue because we have a polytheistic faith.

**Mennonite chameleons.** Some Mennonites worship the color of their *form of righteousness*. We feel smug about our obedience, costly discipleship, simple lifestyle and good deeds. We look down at those with cheap-grace and just-war theologies. But we must remember Jesus' harshest words to any group were not to mere sinners but to the Pharisees—those who were meticulously obedient to the law, those who lived scrupulous lives, those who were righteous in their own eyes.

Some Mennonites worship the color of their own *traditions*. Sometimes it seems more important to be an ethnic Mennonite than to be spiritually regenerated. Menno Simons was a good man, but did he die for our sins?

Some Mennonites worship the color of *pacifism*. For some the entire Christian lifestyle is defined only in terms of peace on earth—banning nuclear weapons, resisting war taxes, fighting the draft. Their prayers are for peace among people, and the Bible is used only as proof-text for peace issues.

**Coping with the chameleon of idolatry.** How do we tear down idols? How do we destroy them in our lives? Idolatry is an inherently human trait, but some may not see theirs.

The first thing to do is *recognize* idolatry. A chameleon concealed among forest shadows and leaves is hard to see. Today we deal with subtle attitudes rather than kneeling before images of gold and wood, and the chameleon is easier to see in other people's lives than in our own.

The next step is to *resolve* to change our attitudes, to resolve to make God number one, to resolve to love him more than all other joys. This is hard because it is harder to change attitudes than physical acts. We often cannot totally abandon our idols. We cannot run from our children, our spouses, or our peace witness. They still need to be in our lives but in a proper perspective.

The chameleon of idolatry is tough and cannot be defeated with bare hands. We need to *request* God's help. A story in 1 Samuel 4-5 tells how the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the tablets with the Ten Commandments inscribed upon them, which contained the earthly representation of God's presence, was captured by the Philistines. The Philistines took the ark to their temple at the city of Ashdod and placed it beside Dagon, one of their gods.

"And when the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place. But when they rose early on the next day, behold, Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground before the ark of the Lord, and the head of Dagon and both his hands were lying cut off upon the threshold" (1 Samuel 5:3-4). This story illustrates that in the presence of God idols fall and crumble. In prayer we need to bring our idols into the presence of God.

To ask God to destroy the chameleon in our lives is scary. It is a prayer God often answers quickly, and it hurts when idols fall. Having our attitudes hammered back into their proper shape hurts. And like Dagon, after the idol falls, it rises again. The camouflaged chameleon easily creeps back into our lives to cheat and deceive us.

I hate the pain of crumbling idols, and I hate fighting repeatedly the same battles over the same territories of my soul. But I would rather hurt and pursue freedom than remain in bondage to any idolatry. •

# We don't need you anymore

*Calvin Redekop*

The newspapers of late are full of tragic accounts of people who have lost their jobs. Many of us have been spared this devastating experience. We may have been turned down when we applied for a certain job, but that is nothing compared to being told, "Sorry, but we don't need you anymore." Only those who have been laid off with no hope of new employment know what this experience does to the self.

In this article I address those among us in the position of employing others and who have had the responsibility of "letting someone go." By the way, that term is most cruel, for it implies the employee wants to get away, or even worse, that one is on a tether like some type of animal.

Are there differences between Christian and non-Christian employers when it comes to terminating people from your employment? Not necessarily. Some non-Christian employers are more humane than some Christians when it comes to termination of employees. But there are some Christian employers who try to practice biblical principles when it comes to termination. What would these principles be?

The Bible is not specific on how to lay off people in a Christian manner. A good friend of mine, who is a sincere Christian, told me one time, "I know of no way to lay off a person without having ill feelings and a disruption of our relationship. I believe there is no way of terminating anyone with a good feeling and a good relationship."

This may be an overstatement, but I think in the main it may be correct. But there are several principles we can adopt and apply.

1. We can do all in our power to keep from laying off people. Laying off people can be a sign of poor management, not planning ahead enough and not including the various contingencies of the future. I know of a plant manager whose first priority is a stable and happy work force. He confronts others of the management team with this principle when future sales and production are discussed.

2. We can accept the fact that no matter how gentle we attempt to be, there will be hurt feelings at some point in our employment experience. It is not really possible to have perfect relationships.

*Assembly line and blue collar workers are usually hardest hit by layoffs.*

Being laid off can hardly be conceived as a kind act to the employee. You are an employer, and hence you need to accept the negative and the enjoyable aspects of managing people.

3. Do what is right regardless of what the emotions and relationships may turn out to be. If I have to lay someone off and I know it will create anger, resentment, financial problems and injured relationships, then I must be sure that I am doing the right thing in the process.

So what does the Bible, especially the New Testament, tell us? The parable of the laborers in Matthew 20 is not appropriate because it refers to a call to work in the kingdom of God. Luke 10:7, which states that a laborer is worthy of his wages, deals with the rewards of preaching in the kingdom.

Jesus does not directly talk about wages or employment except as it pertains to the kingdom work of preaching the gospel. The epistles do not give much further help on what Christian employers are to do with their employees, except to pay them decent wages (James 5:4).

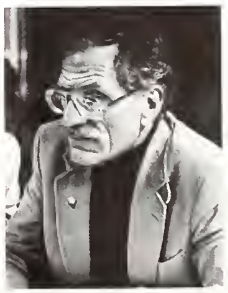
So the New Testament leaves us relatively undirected about the termination of employees. This forces us to look at some of Jesus' principles. Jesus proclaims at least two that are relevant and powerful: (1) Love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:39), and (2) what you would like others to do to you, so do you to them (Matthew 7:12).

In a specific situation where we are forced to terminate employees' jobs, the spirit of Jesus would tell us that we do the following things: **Love the employee as we love ourselves.** We must look out for our employees' welfare as we do for our own. In a contemporary economic structure, given the socio-economic dynamics, this is extremely difficult. To be earning a substantial salary and turning an employee away without any means of immediate support for his or her family, is not in keeping with this principle. Love, in this case, would mean doing all we can to help the person find another job or see to it that family needs are taken care of while he or she looks for work, is retrained or prepares for other types of work.

**Put yourself in the other person's shoes.** If you do this, you are bound to treat the person as humanely and as lovingly as possible. When we see the other person as if we were that person, we become truly compassionate.

Unemployment insurance, relief and other social benefits provided by the state have helped tremendously in softening the crushing blow of unemployment. But Christian employers cannot stop there. They must provide Christ's love and empathy in action.

Terminating an employee, especially in a tight economic situation, can be traumatic. There is no way to diminish the effects of this experience. The question is, Do I love the neighbor and am I able to put myself in his place? If the answer is yes to both questions, our employees will understand better if, out of extreme necessity, we have to say, "I'm sorry, I can't use you any longer."



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# Christian ethics has no place for nuclear war

*Archie Penner*

Recently there came into my hand a pornographic coloring book for children. It was published by The Chrysler Corporation. In bold outline on the first page stood a monstrous symbol of the immoral—a tank, a Chrysler tank. I do not remember whether a coloring scheme accompanied the picture. However, in my mind the color was already fixed. The color was red—crimson red—the color of hell and blood and the souls of men and women, the color of children innocent but wallowing in blood and the unborn smashed and mutilated.

I do not remember what coloring picture appeared on the second page, but the logical sequence would have been a bomb, perhaps a series of bombs, and then the worst pornographic monster to supercede all monsters—the last generation of nuclear bombs. But here there could be no coloring scheme, because ultimate immorality and destruction has no color with which to symbolize its meaning. And after all, this really made no difference. Who would finally be left to color the picture?

From the discussion of the existence and meaning of nuclear weapons and the results of their probable use, the Christian is confronted in a new way with the meaning of our existence and the problems of war ethics. Seemingly the old assumptions which were used to argue for a "just war" are no more. The arguments from the contingencies of history or the pragmatic consideration once offering yeoman service in justifying the evils of war seem equally bankrupt. The casuistry of means and ends has lost its meaning, if it ever really had any, because the means of the nuclear holocaust destroy all ends and thereby make the means immoral.

Could it then be that the Christian, at the end of a tether with reference to philosophical ethics in relation to the subject before us, becomes more willing to accept the radical redemptive ethics of the Bible?

No aspect or dimension of nuclear warfare has any place in Christian thought or action, except to deny it, protest it and seek an alternative to it.

**The argument from creation.** The creation action of a sovereign God—and his sustaining activity of this creation—testifies to the divine affirmation of existence of this world and the life in it. Existence is his holy will. There is no indication in Holy Writ that he is relinquishing control or ownership of his creation. Creation is his glory, his joy. While transcendent to it, he is so immanent in it and it is so personally valuable to him that to handle it negatingly is to fly in the face of his existence and life-affirming purpose. To violate the divine principles written into creation is in a sense to violate God.

Perhaps the ultimate of this truth is expressed by Jesus when he describes

*Jesus Christ, Light of the World, is so desperately needed in times of 'encircling gloom.'*

the Son of Man in the final judgment as saying, "As you did it to one of the least of these . . . you did it to me."

The ultimate global effect of the use of the nuclear weapons now in existence—which must be envisioned as high probability—destroying and therefore negating what God has so decisively affirmed cannot be viewed as anything else but the violation of the property and person of God. This is the essence of sin and rebellion and therefore utterly immoral. Not only is their use immoral; their very existence is immoral. For however much it may become detestable to use them, they have only one purpose and that is to do their capable job. And if it is argued that they are intended for deterrence only, then in principle they have even lost the capacity to deter and therefore are rendered useless.

**The argument from redemption.** Even after sin had entered history, God did not change his stance. Instead of negating life and existence, he affirmed it by providing further means for sustaining the universe and the human race by his grace. The question one would have heard in the council chamber of the Triune God was not, How can we make an end of people or the universe? Rather it was, How can we bring people back and sustain and restore them?

Here it must be remembered that he did this to his enemies. He holds onto them as long as he can. In this respect it is we who force God's hand and, reluctantly, God can hold us no longer.

As he treats his enemies in this life, so he mandates us to treat the enemies. Jesus said, "Love your enemies." Whoever heard of wiping off the map those we love?

If we wipe the globe clean of the enemies whom he loves, is it not that we have played God and made God's creatures irredeemable? What an awesome prospect. What a devastating action. What damning results.

But there is more. If nuclear war will be what one must envision it to be, then those who participate are also responsible for self-destruction and therefore for their own suicide. Consequently the charge of self-destruction and therefore playing God with one's own destiny becomes the immoral action of the participant. This charge is a grave one.

**The argument from the nature of the Christian witness and obedience to the Great Commission.** This argument is best stated in the words of Hans-Werner Bartsch, a German theologian at Frankfurt. I shall only substitute our subject in the places where he refers to conventional war and personnel. This makes Bartsch's discussion even more important for our purpose. According to Bartsch the Christian ethical stance "is not a question of obedience to specific commands anymore, but it is the question of consistency with the Christian witness. Instead of asking whether it is possible under certain circumstances for a Christian to participate in [nuclear] warfare, we have to ask whether participating in [or sanctioning or using nuclear] warfare is a possible way of proclaiming the gospel. Thus it is not the question of whether [nuclear] warfare leaves enough space to be a Christian, as Luther put the question . . . 'whether the Christian faith, by which we are accounted righteous before God, *can tolerate, alongside it*, that I [be involved in the use of nuclear weapons, and with them] slay and stab, rob and burn, as one does to enemies, by military law, in times of [nuclear] war.' If my whole life is to be a witness to the love of God, and if this means faith, then we cannot look for a space 'alongside the faith' and ask whether faith can tolerate that I be a participant [in any aspect of the nuclear complex]. The question is whether my [believing in, justifying or using nuclear] weapons may be a possible way of carrying out the witness."

*Wearing a cross around his neck, a young Salvadoran boy plays soldier with spent cartridges he collected following a battle.*

*A U.S. marine teaches close combat to Lebanese soldiers in Beirut.*

To me this argument carries immense weight. Even Martin Marty and Dean Peerman evaluate it with the following words: ". . . it cannot be denied that his argument manifests logic, conviction and considerable undergirding."

When Christians evaluate in depth and all seriousness the nature and consequence of the use of nuclear weapons and the result of nuclear warfare, they will have a new appreciation of the paradoxical and demanding pronouncement of Jesus that "whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it." Are we coming to the point in history where even the secular humanist may come to a similar conclusion? Could it not be that if one takes the arguments presented seriously and intends to apply them to political, international relationships that the Christian will be strongly motivated to the position that there is really no alternative but unilateral nuclear disarmament?

*Archie Penner is a professor at Steinbach Bible College, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.*

". . . **Where you place your time, you place your life**; where you place your life, you place your love." So says Clayton Barbeau, a counselor and father of eight who is featured in the film series "Creating Family." The Commission on Education's audiovisual library has become a distributor of the series in the hope that the films will become more accessible to the General Conference constituency. The series of five 50-minute films, produced by Franciscan Communications, stresses the importance of family life. Myrna and Randy Krehbiel, secretaries for family life education, made the arrangement with the producers. Each of the films features Barbeau. The titles are "The Husband/Wife Relationship," "Creating Family," "The Male/Female Crisis," "Teens, Singles and Love vs. Sex" and "Parents as Role Models." The rental fee for the entire series is $295 plus postage. The films are sent out to subscribers in sequence. For rental information and bookings, contact the Audiovisual Library, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, telephone (316) 283-5100.

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# NEWS

## Survey shows need for more education options

Newton, Kan.—A survey of delegates at Bethlehem '83 last August conducted by the Commission on Education shows that constituents would like to see the commission continue its emphasis on family while providing more resources in the areas of adult, youth and young adult education.

Tabulation of the four-part, 34-question survey revealed that more than 87 percent of the 639 respondents were in favor of "increased COE involvement in helping congregations strengthen family life education in local churches." That percentage was the strongest plurality within the survey results.

Other strong responses came to the statement "I believe that a knowledge of Mennonite history is important for my identity as a Christian" (84 percent in agreement), and "I encourage Mennonite and Church of the Brethren publishers to pursue cooperative marketing of books" (83 percent in favor). Faith and Life Press, many agreed, should publish and market for the broader Christian community as well as for General Conference (78 percent).

Yet in terms of education programming, respondents felt most in need of additional resources for adults and youth, especially in the areas of biblical study and interpretation. Eighty percent of delegates polled favored "the Commission on Education's development of a 'Church Work Certificate' program that would include a Bible survey, a Bible book study, a Mennonite history course and a Christian education course." More than three-quarters of those surveyed wanted colleges and

*Sprunger (right) discusses survey results with Myrna Krehbiel (center) and Holly Keller.*

Bible schools to offer more courses/programs in congregational teacher training, while nearly that many wanted COE to increase its number of adult study options.

Nearly 80 percent of respondents also asked the commission to provide resource material for youth groups, while 71 percent said that their congregation encouraged teenagers to participate in General Conference programs such as work camps and youth conferences.

When asked to prioritize the topics on which COE should give leadership and/or prepare study materials, those polled rated Bible study, marriage preparation, biblical interpretation, prayer life, and war and peace as the five most important areas of concern. In terms of subgroups within the church with perceived needs to which COE should give special attention, the top five responses were families with teenagers, post-high students away from the home congregation, children, working young adults in the home congregation and families with young children.

More than 36 percent of those surveyed preferred the New International Version as their study Bible, while slightly less than one-quarter preferred the Revised Standard Version. Today's English Version, the King James Version and the Living Bible all got preferences of approximately 5 percent, while a full 20 percent did not respond to the question, the highest no response rating of the questionnaire.

More than half of COE's respondents were within the 40-59 age group. A surprising 42 percent said that they had attended graduate school.

"Having done our preliminary goal setting in 1982, it was important to test COE's programs with the constituency," said executive secretary J. W. Sprunger. "We feel that the survey results affirmed the goals we had set earlier last year."

Sprunger added that the commission will be looking for corroboration of the Bethlehem '83 survey results from congregational surveys to be undertaken in the coming year. "We want to compare these results with responses gathered from churches to see if congregations will say the same things to us as the conference delegates. The church surveys will also help congregations prioritize and plan their own educational programs," Sprunger said.

Congregations interested in participating in these surveys should contact Sprunger at the Commission on Education, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. *Larry Cornies*

**U.S. spies** probably could have saved the Korean Airlines flight 007 in September 1983 but apparently chose, instead, to use it to test Soviet air defenses, said an expert on U.S. intelligence agencies, writing in the *Washington Post*. At least three U.S. electronic surveillance systems keep watch over the Soviet coast and almost certainly watched the Korean plane veer into Soviet airspace, according to James Banford, author of *The Puzzle Palace*, a study of U.S. electronic spying. The United States had at least an hour and a half to warn the pilot his plane was in trouble or to inform the Soviets that it was a passenger craft, Banford said.

**The International Coalition Against Violent Entertainment,** a coalition of groups from eight countries, has released the results of the monitoring of 30 different TV networks for violence. The results found that Americans see more TV violence than any other country monitored. The most violent channels were U.S. pay-cable movie channels, HBO, Showtime and The Movie Channel. These averaged over 20 acts of violence per hour. The broadcast channels with the most intensely violent programs were Fuji and Asahi commercial TV networks in Japan.

## Japanese church reaching out through 'film evangelism'

Beppu, Japan (GCMC)—"Usually they come by ones and twos into the church in Japan. But the Lord has given the Beppu Mennonite Church a vision, and that is to reach multitudes with God's Word through film evangelism."

So wrote Mary Derksen, missionary to Japan under the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission, after more than 1,200 people filled Beppu's largest auditorium last Nov. 13 to see the film *Jesus*, produced by The Genesis Project.

A year earlier the congregation, with a membership of less than 20, had sponsored the showing of Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth*. More than 1,000 people attended, exceeding all expectations.

"Should we try it again?" Derksen wrote. "Would God repeat the miracle? By faith we stepped out. Other churches in the city cooperated. A local television reporter came for an interview about the film meeting and aired it on a popular program in prime time after the evening news. Christians put up 300 posters and passed out 5,000 invitations."

A week before the scheduled showing, only 289 tickets had been sold. "Again fears crept in," wrote the missionary. "Between seven and 10 Christians gathered for prayer at 6:30 every morning of the last week. . . . [By the morning of Nov. 13] the ticket count was 1,025 sold! Excitement filled the church, where 26 were gathered for Sunday worship service. Our hearts were united as we praised the Lord for what he was about to do."

That evening more than 1,200 people—families, small groups from the country and from orphanages, preschool children, students, nuns and priests—arrived at the Beppu International Hall for the showing. After all the bills were paid, 50,000 Yen ($220 U.S.) was left over, which the church decided to give to the city welfare office.

"When Mrs. Kimiyo Sato brought it there, they questioned her and listened for 20 minutes. When they realized that our desire was that people begin reading the Bible, they assured us that next year they would give us their full cooperation, too," Derksen wrote.

"Although we cannot count visible results, these mass meetings are already serving two very important purposes. First, they are creating a unity among the pastors that we hope will gradually bring about more joint efforts in evangelism.

"Second, as Christians see how the Lord answers prayer, they are becoming bolder in sharing their faith and in taking on new projects for reaching out."

## *MCC U.S. joins* amicus *brief in Nebraska school case*

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—The National Committee for Amish Religious Freedom and Mennonite Central Committee U.S. have together filed a "friend of the court" brief with the Supreme Court of the state of Nebraska, urging the court to hear a case involving state licensing of private religious schools.

The case in question is "State of Nebraska vs. Bible Baptist Church." The church was ordered to close its school, Park West Christian School in Lincoln, Neb., because the school and its teachers have not been licensed by the state. A stay against enforcement of the shutdown order has been issued, but tension between private religious schools and the state of Nebraska is at a high pitch.

The Amish, who attempted to establish schools in the 1970s, were met with criminal proceedings instituted in Pawnee County, Nebraska. They left the state rather than fighting the issue in the courts.

The sponsors of the brief believe that the Bible Baptist (Park West Christian School) case can be the means of establishing a rule of law in Nebraska which will protect religious schools. The goal of the Bible Baptist case is to secure the right to carry on religious education without the requirement of a license for the school or the teachers.

The filed brief notes differences between the Bible Baptist case, which is currently seeking state supreme court review, and the Faith Baptist case of 1981, in which the state supreme court decided against Faith Baptist.

In the Faith Baptist case, the issue of a "compelling state interest" in teacher certification was not addressed, according to the brief. If the state is to avoid excessive entanglement in religious affairs, in the language of the court, it must demonstrate a compelling state interest to justify regulation of ministries of the church.

The brief submitted by MCC U.S. and the National Committee for Amish Religious Freedom acknowledges to the court that on the part of some fundamentalist advocates there have been strident reactions to the state in this six-year-old controversy. The brief maintains nevertheless "(a) that a majority of the leaders of the fundamentalist Christian schools in Nebraska have made *peaceable* protest against what they believe to be a fundamentally wrong position of the State and (b) that the controversy has itself engendered a harsh mentality on the part of some State officials, including local judges, leading to overzealous prosecutions and extreme punishments."

**The General Conference's** Commission on Overseas Mission has received a letter of thanks from Nanjing (China) Union Theological Seminary, for a recent monetary gift sent to that institution. "We highly value this as an act of Christian brotherly love and a sign of sincere friendship and mutual trust," wrote the seminary's vice principal, Chen Zemin. COM's contribution, Chen said, "will be pooled into the scholarship fund to be meted out to needy students."

**Farmers in northeastern Brazil** are cultivating their land, hoping for enough rainfall to give a small crop, despite weather forecasts that another year of severe drought is to follow in the chronically arid region. For five years the rains have not come. One church agency reported that over 100,000 people in the region have died of hunger and thirst. The news in Brazil reports that hungry people are raiding food stores and farmers are eating field mice. Infant mortality in one area is 60 percent. Mennonite Central Committee has approved $58,000 for drought aid in Brazil.

**Peter Warren,** a Winnipeg journalist not usually known for a gentle tongue, suggested recently in the *Winnipeg Sun* that "the entire community of Manitoba make a formal, official declaration of appreciation of one of the finest groups this province should declare as an asset—namely, the Mennonite Central Committee. I honestly do not know of another group that is so straightforward, so Christian honest, so low profile—and yet they are always (but always) the first off the mark to meet the needs of their fellow men in trouble. And they do it without Bible thumping." (*Mennonite Brethren Herald*)

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# Voltaic hand-dug well program now being used in Uganda

Kitgum, Uganda (MCC)—Scattered across Kitgum District in northern Uganda are several hundred boreholes. They were drilled during the past 40 years in an era of capital intensive water development programs.

Today many of these boreholes stand unused, pumps broken, shafts cracked. In a country still burdened with the shattered political and economic legacy of the Idi Amin years, there is not enough money or technical equipment to repair them.

Vern and Janet Hostetler, Mennonite Central Committee volunteers from Kidron, Ohio, are working in Kitgum to help villagers develop shallow hand-dug wells.

The simple wells, constructed largely on a self-help basis, are the most appropriate water technology for rural Uganda, Vern Hostetler believes.

"When a borehole breaks, the villager has no control over his water source," he notes. "He can only wait for an expensive hoist truck and technical crew to arrive. Our wells are much simpler. The bucket, rope and cross bar can all be provided locally. There is no need to be without water."

The self-help aspect of the digging program is important, Hostetler says. In addition to giving the village a sense of ownership and a desire to maintain the well, it makes the wells more affordable.

Local residents are responsible to collect and provide the sand, broken rocks and water needed to cast the cement blocks that line the wells. They must also construct a thatched roof shelter under which the blocks are cured. The village also provides room and board for several technical assistants.

The inputs that cannot be provided locally, such as reinforcing bar and cement, are also paid for by the village, though at a subsidized rate.

"There is just no comparison in the cost between mechanically dug boreholes, which can cost up to $6,000 per meter, and the hand-dug self-help well that averages $25 per meter," Hostetler says. "The borehole must be totally a relief project, while the hand-dug well is cheap enough for the local community to afford themselves."

*Ugandan well technician Odong Kara builds sides of well with curved cement blocks. Kara is being trained in the Mennonite Central Committee well-digging program in Uganda.*

Hostetler identifies one of the major cost-saving components of the program as casting curved bricks for lining the well on site rather than trucking in rings. The simple brick form used is small enough to be carried on a bicycle to the well site.

Hostetler was the first worker in the Ugandan well project, which has since expanded to include two other volunteers. These workers, as well as the majority of project funding, are provided by EURO ACTION ACORD, a British-based development agency.

This simple hand-dug well technology was largely developed in an MCC well-digging program in Upper Volta. Former Upper Volta MCC worker Johann Zimmerman of Rifton, N.Y., visited the Uganda site in 1981 to assist Hostetler with organizing the new program.

The Church of Uganda Christian Rural Service workers and government community development workers begin the process by finding interested villages.

In many of these areas, women are walking five to 10 miles each day to the nearest water source. The shortage of available water also frequently contributes to a host of health-care problems, Hostetler observes.

Villages identified as having a need for improved water sources then apply for a well, which could provide enough water for 300 people. Nearly 30 applications are being processed.

"We meet with the villagers to explain the program and to see how well-organized and motivated they are," Hostetler said. A manual test auger is brought to the site, and if sufficient water-bearing aquifer, an underground layer of porous rock or sand containing water, is found within 15 meters of the surface, construction can begin.

"But we won't start building until they have collected all materials and paid half of their cost," he added.

The well can be completed in two to four months, depending on how motivated the village is and on the depth of the well. Digging often involves 100 people. The deepest well has been 69 feet.

While villagers are asked to assist with as much of the work as possible, Hostetler observes that increasing the number of wells under construction will require training additional technicians capable of supervising the digging and brick-laying process. Presently six Ugandan community development workers are being trained as well-digging technicians. *Jim Harder*

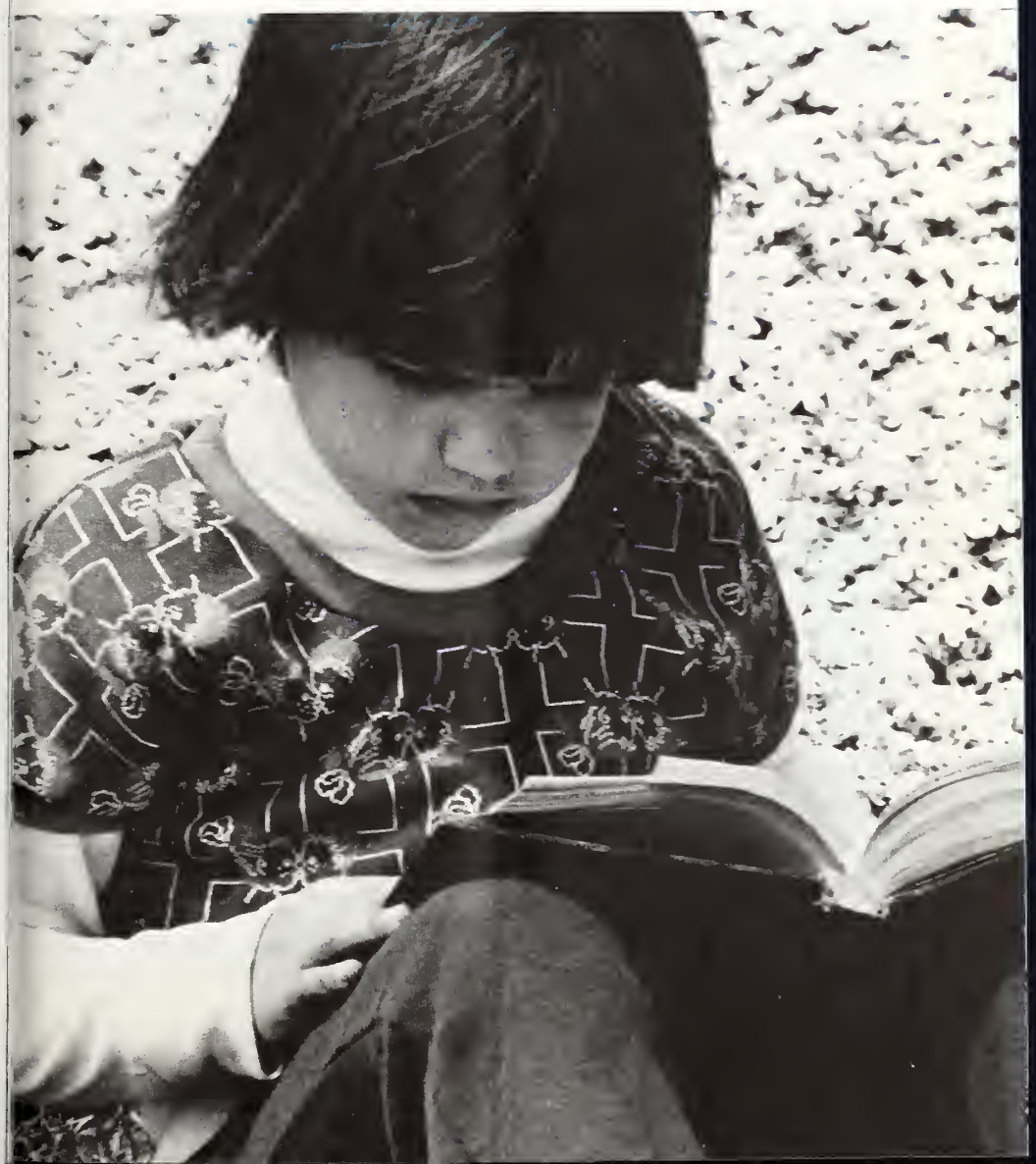
# THE MENNONITE

## WM EDITION

Jan 31

# window TO MISSION

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1984



# THE OPEN WINDOW

WHEN MY DAUGHTER, KAREN, was in elementary school, each night at bedtime was a special time for both of us. We shared the warmth and companionship of reading together.

First I introduced her to all the books in the Laura Ingalls Wilder collection. After we had explored Laura's world. We read books by Mennonite authors.

Together we enjoyed Elaine Sommers Rich's *Hannah Elizabeth* and Ruth Unrau's *Who Needs an Oil Well?* Then as our interest and excitement increased we were enraptured with Barbara Claassen Smucker's books including: *Cherokee Run*, *Wigwam in the City*, and *Henry's Red Sea*.

Soon after finishing *Henry's Red Sea* a lady from our congregation invited Karen to accompany her to another church to hear Peter Dyck speak. Karen was awed with hearing and meeting the "real Peter and Elfrieda Dyck," the ones in *Henry's Red Sea*. It was like history coming to life right before her own eyes!

Now Karen is in her senior year of high school. We haven't read together at bedtime for five to six years, but in more recent years for our family devotional time we have shared chapters from Cornelia Lehn's *Peace Be With You* and right now are reading our way through *I Heard Good News Today*, also by Lehn.

I wouldn't trade those many hours we have shared reading together for all the money in the world. We experienced closeness and the excitement of exploring other worlds and other ways of life. It has broadened our appreciation and understanding of our world.

Why not explore the pages of this issue of *Window to Mission* which share about recently published books from our conference press. Hopefully your exploration will whet your appetite to buy or borrow the books for your own personal and family enjoyment and growth. Maybe you too can enjoy the kind of experiences Karen and I have shared.

—Jeannie Zehr

COVER

Opening the covers of a good book is like opening the windows and doors of your life to the whole world, past, present, future, and imaginative.

WM

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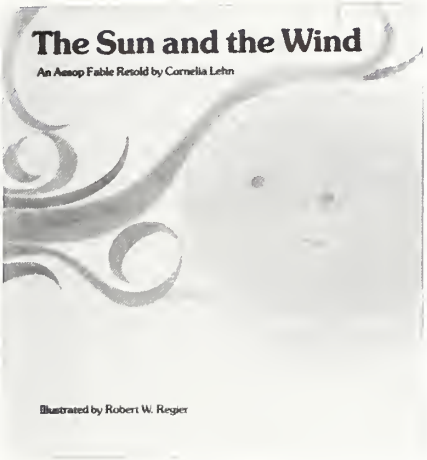
# From Dream to Birth




**Edna Dyck**

"LOVE IS MUCH stronger than force." Cornelia Lehn, former director of children's education for the General Conference Mennonite Church, believed that and wanted children to know it as well.

Robert Regier, professor of art at Bethel College, had always wanted to illustrate a children's book. Elizabeth Yoder, editor, and Dick Rempel, manager, were excited about publishing a picture storybook—something that Faith and Life Press had not done before. These four were the key persons involved in the dreaming and the birth of *The Sun and the Wind*.

In 1978 Lehn had just finished editing the Foundation Series for children and was ready for a change of pace. Harold Regier and Hubert Swartzendruber from the Peace and Social Concerns offices of the General Conference and Mennonite churches approached her with the request that she collect and write a book of peace stories for children. There was also interest in a peace message book for very small children. Because peace was her special interest and storytelling her special gift, Cornelia took up the challenge.

A Schowalter Foundation grant was received to finance the project. After a year of careful research and writing by Cornelia, and almost a year of editing and production work, the book *Peace Be With You* was released in March 1980. Children of all ages have been inspired by these stories of persons from many time periods who took seriously Christ's example of peace.

But what of the needs of the preschool child? Throughout her time of writing Cornelia had kept the idea of a picture book in the back of her mind. None of the stories had seemed just right, however.

She had always liked the Aesop fable about the wind and the sun. In the story the wind with all its might and fury was unable to persuade a man to take off his coat, while the sun with its quiet warmth easily did the job. That seemed like a real peace message.

But when Cornelia gave the manuscript to several people to read, one person raised the question whether it is permissible to reinterpret a fable. A professor in Children's Literature, however, assured her that retelling and reinterpreting an Aesop's fable was indeed permissible. So she began working on the text in a serious way.

Meanwhile, back at the office in Newton, Kansas, Elizabeth Yoder wondered if it was wise to accept such a children's picture book for publication. Faith and Life Press is primarily a church curriculum-oriented press.

Should they branch out into the children's literature field?

The cost of producing a full-color picture book seemed overwhelming. It would require the services of a top-notch artist. Dick Rempel did a cost analysis, and eventually a second Schowalter grant was received. This money would be used to pay for the illustrations.

A May 29, 1981, memo from Elizabeth to Dick read: "I shared the preliminary estimates for *The Sun and the Wind* with the Department of Literature Development at our May 25 meeting. They would like to see us print 5,000 copies and to go with a hardbound book. They see it as library material. Bob Regier is definitely interested in illustrating it although he has not signed a contract. He will be meeting with us Tuesday, June 2, to discuss specifications."

Bob Regier remembers hearing about *The Sun and the Wind* first in terms of whether he could suggest a good illustrator for a children's book. Elizabeth confesses that she hoped even in her initial contact that Bob would be able and willing to do it himself.

Bob says that the more he thought about the prospect, the more the idea of illustrating a children's book appealed to him. He finally decided to clear his summer schedule and take on the project.

Bob's first thought was to work in the woodcut or linoleum block medium because printmaking is one of his primary interests. When he worked out a sample page in this medium, however, he soon realized how time consuming it would be.

At that point he had to rethink the whole project and finally decided that because color was a very important ingredient in the story, using acrylic paint as a medium would offer greater flexibility.

Cornelia enjoyed writing and creating with tissue paper and magic markers. "It fell into place when I drew the pictures," she said. "I worked feverishly; the sun got bigger and bigger and I felt the wind."

Bob experienced a similar thrill when the story and pictures came together for him. "One of the reasons I was interested in doing the book was because of the imagery. How do you illustrate the wind, for instance? The story was fun," he commented.

It was disappointing to later discover

*Cornelia Lehn and a neighbor, Gordie Eckhardt*

*Illustrator Robert Regier*

that the colors, particularly red and yellow, were not completely reproducible. Because red and yellow—the sun colors figured so prominently in the story, it was decided to use fluorescent inks to make the colors brighter and more truly red and yellow.

Author, editor, and illustrator also had second thoughts about how the story ended. The sun, having won the argument, seemed somewhat vindictive, which might jeopardize the peace message. A minor word change made the sun seem friendlier.

For Cornelia and the office staff a highlight came one day in late August 1982 when full-color artwork pages were laid out in sequence on the conference room table for all to see.

For Bob it was a highlight to see the beautiful colorful pages come off the press for the first time. It was also special to have a friend tell him how a group of schoolchildren had enjoyed the book when it was read to them.

It was certainly memorable for the Commission on Education and staff to have Cornelia read the book to several children (and a large audience) at Bethlehem '83.

A highlight for Dick was receiving a letter from the Caldecott Committee requesting a copy of *The Sun and the Wind* for consideration for an award. The Caldecott Award is given annually to the most distinguished children's picture book published during the previous year.

*The Sun and the Wind* is an important book because it has a powerful message that bears reading over and over again as preschoolers are apt to require.

It is important in our violence-prone age that children at a very young age absorb the idea that there is a better way to settle disputes than to "blow with the might and fury of the wind!" *The Sun and the Wind* is important because it will help the church reach into homes, day-care centers, nursery schools, church and secular libraries with the story of peace.

"Of course, my main objective was to teach little children that love is stronger than force," Cornelia says.

## More about...
# Praying for Peace

As Jesus approached Jerusalem, facing the ultimate crisis of his life, he was overcome with emotion for this beautiful city. The report we find in Luke's Gospel is that Jesus wept and said, "If only you knew today what is needed for peace."

Your Peace Covenant Prayer Group may want to enter into Jesus' agony with him as we weep together over Ottawa, Washington, Moscow, Beirut, Peking, Warsaw, Berlin, and your city. You may identify so closely with your longing for peace in our world that you, too, will be moved to tears. Such humble prayer is a thing of beauty in God's sight.

Jesus said that we do not always know what is needed for peace. Can your group discover those things which make for peace? You may want to begin your search on a personal level. Remember, though peace is of international concern, it begins with harmony between human beings.

Let us pray for the resolution of conflict and the easing of tensions wherever they occur. In our cities and communities, in our churches, in our homes, may we be open to that which is needed for peace to become a way of life.

—Lois Schrag

# THE CO CONNECTION

*Our guest columnist is Sophie Brown, missionary, to Taiwan. She writes about the trip she, her husband Roland, and his sister took to China.*

OUR GUIDE kept asking, "Why did your parents choose to live in PuYang? PuYang is such a poor, drought and flood area. Why did they not go to the cities where there are plentiful supplies, medical facilities, and other foreigners? Why did they come here?"

Today PuYang is not an open area and is not on the list of approved places for tourists. Our initial request to visit there was denied. Finally, however, Roland and Jessie were allowed to return to the place of their childhood, where Dad and Mom Brown lived and worked for so many years and where there were several churches established.

Roland and Jessie were perhaps the first Westerners to set foot there in forty years. Their seven escorts were apprehensive and jittery, obviously careful not to allow any personal contact with anyone there. They were allowed to see the buildings and take pictures freely, that was all.

The Brown house and one church had been destroyed by the flood, and the graves of their two brothers had been removed with the rest of the graves for more productive use of the land.

One of the churches now being used by the school, the hospital building, and the middle school were all being used even though they were quite dilapidated.

To walk down the old street and to hear the church bell ring on the hour brought nostalgic feelings and memories. The one contact they tried to make was thwarted.

Roland and Jessie met the rest of us in Kaifeng, a city over 3,000 years old, a city dotted with pagodas, memorials, and palace plots.

Sight-seeing on this trip to China has given me a new respect for the agelessness, the art and beauty of this great country. It lies like a sleeping giant that will some day wake up and surprise the world. I believe the giant is already stirring.

In Kaifeng several persons who had known the Brown family came to see us. Mr. X particularly wanted to tell Roland and Jessie that the problems involved in their family's living among them in PuYang were not in vain. Food supplies were meager, medical facilities nonexistent, and roads were nearly impossible. He also said that the tragic death of their brother was not in vain either. The seed had been planted. The ground was very, very hard, but the life of the seed was not snuffed out, even now bearing fruit a hundredfold.

The church is growing rapidly. Our hotel room vibrated with the enthusiastic stories of how the Spirit is bringing people to the church almost faster than they can nurture.

During the revolution great persecution took place, especially in PuYang. There is no open church there today. In God's own time the dormant seed will bring the increase.

In our own work we must believe that God will also bring forth the harvest in his good time. Rejoice and be glad!

# PROGRAM 4 I HEARD GOOD NEWS TODAY

Anne Neufeld Rupp

*The resource for this program is the book* I Heard Good News Today *by Cornelia Lehn (Faith and Life Press, 1983). In the following material the book will be referred to as IHGNT.*

*The following dramatized interview takes us back through time to the first century. We try to understand the how and what of the good news through our twentieth-century eyes and experience. By interviewing Paul, the one most frequently identified as a bearer of good news, participants engage in a biblical reflection on the church in its early years.*

*The interview may be used in a variety of ways. Flashback scenes from IHGNT may be told or read. Other ideas for using the interview are:*

*(a) Procure a slide or picture of "Paul Writing the Epistles," (Rembrandt) and use it as a backdrop while reading the interview. (The slide or print is available through art museum shops and public libraries.)*

*(b) Adapt interview for a panel discussion with one person to be Paul and the parts of the reporter done by four or five other persons.*

*(c) Dramatize the flashbacks, or insert additional skits from* Martyrs Mirror *by Thieleman J. van Braght (Herald Press, 1972).*

*Costume actors in first-century clothing. For a sense of group participation have actors walk in from the back, or actually get up from where they are seated in the group.*

REPORTER: **Paul, I'm very glad to meet you here. You are one of those personalities we have all read and heard about, but to interview you makes you seem more like a real person.**

PAUL: Hopefully my being here will help adjust the halo that often rests rather heavily on my head. Too often people have given me more authority than I ever believed I had, and have interpreted my writings as a final writ for all times, rather than seeing my original intent.

REPORTER: **Could you be more specific?**

PAUL: In your century you have had the good news for a long time. Your communications system is such that you have conferences, publish literature, and get some sense of unity and togetherness. Even with all those assets, I understand you still have some problems in communication and understanding. Now put yourself into my century. Churches were small and scattered in different parts of the then-known world. (Flashback scene IHGNT #5, p. 10)

REPORTER: **I understand that it took awhile for the gospel to move beyond Jerusalem.** (Flashback scene IHGNT #3, p. 4)

PAUL: Yes, some early Christians thought the gospel was for Jews, not Gentiles. Persecution, however, soon scattered the early Christians and the good news was shared wherever they went. (Flashback scene IHGNT #2, p. 3)

REPORTER: **In other words, Jesus' last instructions to the disciples about going into all the world, about being witnesses in all the earth were actually taking place. The good news of the resurrection was alive and well. (Flashback scene IHGNT #1, p. 2)**

PAUL: Yes, many were sharing the good news. The church at Antioch believed Barnabas and I were to give our time to spreading the good news. How I remember those days in Asia Minor. Then finally I reached Macedonia. (Flashback scene IHGNT #4, p. 6)

REPORTER: **Back to your original statement—I still don't get the connection between your halo, as you called it, communication, and all those scattered churches.**

PAUL: The Roman road system was good, but we didn't have automation like you do, so guest speakers in churches were virtually unknown. Books were handwritten scrolls of the Old Testament, which a church would have. Because churches had so little connection with one another, and came from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, each church was wide open to heresies, misinterpretations of the gospel, and adapting the gospel to its particular cultural and religious orientation.

That's why I spent so much time writing letters to these early churches. Later the Gospels were written and once the churches had access to those, it was very helpful. (Flashback scene IHGNT #6, p. 11)

REPORTER: **Would you say then that your letters were very specific in their intent? Not only were you writing the churches about the meaning of the gospel, and encouraging them, but you also spoke to specific needs, and often were offering correctives to particular problems of a church.**

PAUL: Exactly. One example was the Corinthian church. Those folks gave me a lot of headaches. Their cultural and religious orientation prior to their becoming Christian made them interpret the gospel differently.

They were very ecstatic and charismatic. I offered some correctives, suggesting that speaking in tongues was a gift, but not the most important or only gift in the church.

They brought their previous sexual license into the church, and I had to correct that. Also I had to correct their quarreling and competitiveness.

Although I'm all for women, remember not only Jesus had some followers who were women, but I had women coworkers, the women at Corinth were confusing the understanding of Christian freedom with a form of lawlessness. They were disrupting the worship services, and cutting their hair, which in Corinth was the sign of a whore, and so I had to correct this behavior which was not glorifying Jesus Christ at all.

REPORTER: **I've also heard you say that at Galatia the problems were the opposite. They were negating Christian freedom and returning to a legalism. I assume that much of what you wrote to them was again corrective, and a reflection on the meaning of the Holy Spirit and freedom for the church.**

**But tell me, what does all of this have to do with the halo you mentioned earlier?**

PAUL: I notice that your twentieth-century Christians sometimes take my corrective words, and confuse them with the gospel. How much arguing and bickering you do! Every time you say, "Paul says . . ." my halo feels tighter.

Instead of beginning with Jesus' teachings, and looking at mine through them, you begin with my correctives and put a halo over them. If you would only look at my writings in the context of first-century culture and customs, you would realize that not only Jesus was a radical, but I was too.

If you could only grasp how the gos-

pel freed men, women, children, and slaves in the context of the first century, you would allow yourselves to be transformed within the context of the twentieth century.

REPORTER: **When I read the book, *I Heard Good News Today*, I began to glimpse some of that joy, freedom, and exuberance across twenty centuries, that you are talking about.**

PAUL: Now don't get me wrong. Not everything I wrote in my letters was corrective, nor did I always speak to specific needs or situations.

My concern in every letter was for the church to understand the marvelous mercy of God through Christ, and the goodness of God through the empowering Spirit. That's a great part of each epistle.

REPORTER: **Luther quoted from Romans a lot, and it's a favorite of many. Why is that book such a favorite?**

PAUL: Probably because it has such continued meaning and application throughout the centuries. If you want to know what the gospel is all about, what it means to be a Christian, read that letter.

You see, most of my other letters were to churches I had started, so I knew the situations, needs, and problems well. That was not the case at Rome. That church was begun by someone else, and I had not visited there.

Now my dream was to go to Spain. I had always wanted to be the one who would spread the gospel throughout Europe. But that privilege was given to others. (Any flashback scenes from IHGNT #7-11, pp. 12-22)

REPORTER: **I'm not sure what going to Spain had to do with Rome.**

PAUL: I planned to visit Rome on the way, so I wrote this long letter in advance. I had time, so I wrote a very orderly treatise. One could call it my theology. That way they would know what I believe.

REPORTER: **We're coming to the end of the interview, but would you briefly capsulize the central thoughts of Romans for us?**

PAUL: Yes. In the first eleven chapters I talk about what God has done. That's the good news. Both Jew and Gentile have sinned, and we have peace through Jesus Christ, God's mercy.

I go on to describe the work of the Spirit in the Christian. After chapter 12 I talk about the Christian response to this marvelous act of God. Out of gratefulness we permit God to transform our lives, and that gratitude living spills out into every aspect of our lives, the personal use of our gifts within the church, our functions within the social and political arena of our lives and so on. That's it in a capsule.

REPORTER: **Thank you Paul. I would like to close with a prayer, using one that you wrote many years ago.** (Read Eph. 1:1-10)

PAUL: I am glad you could step into my century, and that I could step into yours. When I read *I Heard Good News Today*, I marvel. It is humbling to realize that the small work begun by a few disciples, by a few faithful, by myself, many centuries ago, has pervaded the whole world. Churches are being planted and lives are being changed. What we began you have and are continuing. I have fought the good fight, may you too. I heard good news today!

**LITANY OF GOOD NEWS**

LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
God sent his Son,
To bring us peace and joy
To make us truly one.
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**
LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
Christ crucified,
Could not be held
Death was defied.
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**

LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
Christ rose again.
The earth's aloud with joy
God's great Amen!
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**
LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
Five hundred more,
The resurrected Christ
Saw, called him Lord.
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**
LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
The Spirit's power
The early church aflame
God's finest hour.
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**
LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
From land to land
The good news spread
Christ's great command.
GROUP: **I heard good news today!**
LEADER:
Two thousand years ago
Good news is everywhere.
The everlasting God,
Who was, and is, will be,
Through Jesus Christ the Lord
The Holy Spirit's power,
The Three in One,
Our final victory.
GROUP: **I heard good news today,**
**Yes, Halleluia**
ALL: **WE HEARD GOOD NEWS TODAY!**

**A HYMN TO BE SUNG** (To the tune of "Go Tell It on the Mountain," *Youth Hymnary*, #112.
CHORUS:
Hear good news we are telling
Shout it aloud and sing for joy.
Hear good news we are telling,
That Jesus Christ is Lord.

1. For the early Christians
   The good news filled with joy
   Was shared by men and women
   Called people of the Way.
2. Good news spread to Asia
   To India and Rome,
   To Africa and Europe,
   Wherever Christians roamed.
3. Sharing in our homeland
   Or countries far away,
   The good news keeps on spreading,
   It's still good news today.

## PROGRAM "how-to" ideas

1. For your devotional time obtain and use material provided in the 1983-84 "Devotional/Resource Packet" available for $2 from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.
2. Order several copies of the COM "Overseas Prayer Directory" from the Commission on Overseas Mission, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. As a group, cut out and attach pictures to a large world map. Glue a file card under each name. Ask group members to write any pertinent data or human interest material on the cards of the missionaries they know.
3. Plan for the reading or dramatization of several stories from IHGNT.
4. Place a felt-backed circle in the center of a flannelgraph board. Write CHURCH on it, and attach a string for each member on the outer edge. Give each person a felt-backed circle and ask her to write down how and where she personally shares the good news. Ask them to attach their circles around the CHURCH circle, taping the other end of the string to each one. Close with a prayer of dedication.
5. Using stories from IHGNT create a readers theater presentation for your program.
6. IHGNT may be used as your program theme for the year. Use stories from it for devotionals.

Consider using some of the stories in children's time during Sunday worship services. Use puppets, slides, pantomine, drama, and readers theater.

# slice of life

**Jeannie Zehr**

EACH DAY is like a gift, O Lord, sent straight from heaven from you. A surprise gift, tied in a beautiful wrapping and bow.

When the gift arrives, I look at it, shake it a bit. Then with a feeling of expectation and thanks, I untie the bow.

Sometimes I remove the wrapping slowly and carefully. Other times I rush to see what is inside. The lid is off. The box is filled, sometimes with beauty and aesthetic wonders, happiness.

Other times, as I carefully lift the gift from its package, I am unsure just what it is, just what you intend for me to do with it. I wonder how it will work.

I even doubt a bit. "Did God get mixed up? This gift can't be mine! Maybe I could exchange it for something a little more suitable to my taste."

But, no. I examine the gift tag and it reads, "To Jeannie, from God with love."

It really is mine! It's up to me to take it, experience it, savor it, find its meanings and use. It's up to me to turn it over to you for guidance and strength.

When the day is over, Lord, I pray that I may return your gift and see your smile, and hear your words, "Well done my good and faithful servant. Well done."

# Behind the Back of the Lot

**Helen C. Coon**

SOMEHOW IT DOESN'T seem strange that I am writing this article concerning my book *The House at the Back of the Lot*, (Faith and Life Press, 1982) at the same time that I am reading *Sara's Trek* by Florence Schloneger for the second time.

Earlier as I read *Sara's Trek*, it amazed me that two persons, miles apart, could be writing books that would later be published by the same press, about a year apart, which would fit like a pair of bookends.

In Florence's case she enjoyed the friendship of a student who had been a refugee girl. In my case I was the girl whose mother was faithful in collecting and preparing clothes for refugees. I wasn't always too happy about the mess that this caring made!

*The House at the Back of the Lot* owes a lot to friends, however. A good friend, Shirley Loganbill, told me that the book had to be written after hearing me share a story at the Newton, Kansas, Creative Writers Fellowship. She continually nudged me through the fifteen or more years it took to get up my nerve, do the research, and write the numerous drafts.

Another friend and relative, Muriel Stackley, was willing to read a very rough draft. She wrote in red ink on the front page, ". . . I loved every minute of it . . ." From this encouragement I was brave enough to continue.

Finally, Elizabeth Yoder, editor, and Edna Dyck, copy editor, both at Faith and Life Press, became my friends after the book was accepted for publication by a committee, and we began working together in the production process.

The book itself is fiction, and the people are fictitious, but it is based on the kind of life our family lived in the Brighton Park neighborhood of Chicago. We lived in that type of house, yes, at the back of the lot. In the book I took several year's events and put them into one year for plot purposes. Most of the incidents had some basis in actual events or experiences.

Those events which happened in real life most nearly as they are portrayed in the book include: the school stamp and bond drive incident; the visit with the Civilian Public Service boys from Alexian Brothers Hospital; the Christmas present exchange; the "Girls Stand In" experience; and the VE-Day story. Others based on similar experiences, but changed somewhat include: the Dewey parade; the hotel; my sister's romance; the blue roses; and the contest.

If you would like to know more, just ask me or any of the members of my childhood family. We just might tell you!

# Encounter with a Story

**Florence Schloneger**

EVERY ONCE in a while each of us encounters a story that is full of meaning; we sense that it somehow connects with our own story and brings new meaning to our existence.

That was the case as I listened to a member of my small group tell her life story. As a child in Russia, her family fled from the country in front of the retreating German army during World War II.

After a few months in Poland, the advancing Russian army forced them on the road again. This flight was swift and disorganized and my friend and another girl her age were separated from their parents in the panic.

The thought of two ten-year-old girls fending for themselves as they fled the battle lines of a war, tugged at my deepest fears. What if I or my children faced such a future? I needed to be assured that God was greater than even the most terrible circumstances, and I wanted my children to know it, too.

I interviewed my friend on tape for hours intending to write a short story for a Sunday school paper; but I found the story to be too powerful for such cursory treatment. I decided to fictionalize it for a children's book.

Next followed long hours researching the Russian Mennonites, especially during the 1940s. A moving story emerged—a story of thousands of refugees sustained and delivered by a loving God as he worked through people to bring them to a new land.

I'll never forget how scary it was to type the first sentence of the book. The paper was clean in the typewriter, my head felt giddy and my hands shook. Would I be able to make the story come alive?

From that time on, I wrote about an hour each day. But when I came to the place where the girls became lost and separated from their parents, I was also lost—for words. Although the girls eventually found a children's home after three weeks of wandering, my friend remembered nothing of that interim period. My imagination was incapable of dreaming up anything.

Fortunately my friend stayed in contact with her companion and soon I received her friend's account of those three weeks. I pored over the letter until I knew it by heart, then I put it away and wrote. The facts of the story belonged to the histories of two women, but the feelings were mine as I wove all my own fears into the story. I experienced that God was faithful.

*Sara's Trek* (Faith and Life Press, 1981) was a spiritual experience for me. God's care and leading overwhelmed and supported me. My hope is that the readers can also experience God's faithfulness.

# WM office jottings from Joan

Something unusual took place at the office this past week. For the first time in WM history, WM received a gift annuity. The contributor was a person who has been active in her local women's organization for many years and wanted to make a special kind of contribution. Her monetary gift will be invested. She will receive yearly interest payments until the time of her death, whereupon WM will become the beneficiary. Her gift will support ideals and worthy projects that will long outlast her life.

This event sparked a new idea in my mind. There must be others in our organization who would like to consider this kind of stewardship. There have been so many women over the years who have invested their lives in serving Christ and the church through their local WM group. They feel a special affirmation for what WM has done and continues to do. What better way than to give a gift *now* for the future?

If you have interest in exploring the idea of gift annuities, (or wills as mentioned in last month's issue), please contact either Women in Mission or the General Conference Stewardship office. We'd be happy to discuss the possibilities of future giving with you.

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The WM Advisory Council will be meeting March 2-5 in Newton, Kansas. The council members—about thirty women from Canada and the United States ask for your prayers in their behalf as they meet to evaluate past involvements and discuss future projects and programs of WM. If you have concerns or suggestions for the council, please contact your district representatives or express your views directly to the WM office before this meeting.

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For the price of a light lunch in your favorite restaurant you can now own your personal copy of *Women in Search of Mission*, the story of the history of our organization written so aptly by former WM coordinator Gladys Goering. Faith and Life Press is making this book available for half price. It may be purchased from your local Mennonite bookstore or ordered from Faith and Life Press, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for $1.98. Add 63c postage when ordering.

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One of the goals identified by WM for the decade of the '80s is that of "encouraging more communication among societies, districts/provinces within our organization through greater sharing of ideas and persons." The WM staff and executive, during the next triennium, are committed to making more personal contact with local groups, districts, and conferences. They would like to have opportunity to tell the WM and General Conference "story." One way of facilitating this is by inviting staff or executive to hold WM workshops and, in general, to participate at the various retreats and conferences held every year. If your district/province would like more information about how this might be done, write to the WM office for details.

## contributors

**Edna Dyck** (From Dream to Birth) is the copy editor for Faith and Life Press and also the revision editor for the Foundation Series for children. She writes devotionals for REJOICE magazine, likes to travel, and has a special love for children. Edna and her husband George, who is a psychiatrist, live in Newton, Kansas. They are the parents of four children.

**Lois Schrag** (More About Praying for Peace) is our WM representative on the Peace and Justice Reference Council. She works in a photography studio, and is also actively involved at home, and in her church as a Sunday school teacher. She lives near Kingman, Kansas.

**Anne Neufeld Rupp** (Program 4: I Heard Good News Today) is co-pastor of the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kansas. She is a member of the Prairie View Mental Health Center board and the Western District Ministerial Committee. She enjoys traveling, knitting, cycling, and working on her family tree.

**Jeannie Zehr** (Slice of Life) edits *Window to Mission* from her home at 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana. She also works as director of the Maplewood Nursery School. She and her husband, Marvin, are the parents of a college-age son, and a daughter who is a senior in high school.

**Helen C. Coon** (Behind the Back of the Lot) and her pastor husband live in Deer Creek, Oklahoma. She is a graduate of Bluffton College in Ohio and does free-lance writing. Helen and Bob are the parents of three children, one of whom is still at home.

**Florence Schloneger** (Encounter with a Story) works as a nurse-aide at a retirement center. During the past few years she has been working on her master's degree in Theological Studies and hopes to complete this work in the not too distant future. She and her husband, Weldon, are the parents of two sons. They live at 275 Loveman Avenue, Worthington, Ohio.

**Joan Wiebe** (WM Office Jottings) is our General Conference Women in Mission coordinator working out of the WM Office at 722 Main Street, Newton, Kansas. She and her husband, Leonard, are the parents of three children, one still in high school.

## credits

PHOTO: Cover, Robert Maust Photography, Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Edna Dyck

Anne Neufeld Rupp

Jeannie Zehr

## forecast

In the April-May issue of *Window to Mission* Cornelia Lehn will share about our *Umsiedler* sisters. Who are these Mennonite sisters who have moved from Russia to West Germany? How are we relating to them?

Also in the issue will be a special feature by Gayle Wiebe about her visit to the Soviet Union. She will share what she learned about Soviet women.

Printed in U.S.A.

# bright ideas

IN THIS ISSUE of *Window to Mission* we have highlighted four recent publications from Faith and Life Press. All four books would make excellent additions to your family and church libraries. Why not consider them as gift ideas for your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews as well as friends.

If you are a schoolteacher, buy those suitable for the age group you teach and have them available in your reading corner.

Your Women in Mission group might want to consider purchasing some of the books to contribute to your public library or libraries. These can be a real peace eduction tool.

If your pastor doesn't have a copy of *I Heard Good News Today*, why not give him or her a gift copy. It is an excellent resource for Sunday morning children's stories.

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When your WM women are gathered around the quilt frames working on their last quilting projects, why not read to them from the book *I Heard Good News Today*? We've heard of one group that has successfuly tried this idea. It's fun and a good way to learn some of the exciting stories of persons who have shared the news of Christ.

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Looking for a project for your WM group or children's group? Write to the Commission on Home Ministries, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for their new "SEED" project. They'll supply you with a "SEED Catalog," gummed labels to use on individual collection containers, and information about the projects supported through SEED (Stewards Entrusted with Economic Decisions). Tell them how many labels you will need.

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Are you a member of the organization called "Another Mother for Peace"? This non-profit, non-partisan group sends out periodic newsletters to inform you of concerns in the U.S. political arena about which persons concerned about world peace ought to be informed and involved in action. They also have available for $6.50 the "War is not healthy for children and other living things" medallions.

If interested, write Another Mother for Peace, 407 North Maple Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

**"How to Plant a Church,"** a seminar sponsored by the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, was held Nov. 28-Dec. 1, 1983, in Pasadena, Calif. Mennonites who attended are pictured from left (back row): Leonard Wiebe, pastor, Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.; Gary Martin, Central District church planting consultant; David Habegger, Western District church planter; Eleanor Loewen, Conference of Mennonites in Canada education consultant; John Freed, Philadelphia; (front row): Neville Peterson, pastor, Bethel Mennonite Church, Wolf Point, Mont.; Ben Rahn, pastor, Atwater (Calif.) Mennonite Church; and Donald Yoder, Commission on Home Ministries secretary for church planting and evangelism.

**Graduates of the Bethel College** (North Newton, Kan.) nursing program received the highest mean score compared to graduates of every other nursing program in Kansas on their State Board Examinations last summer. The 13 Bethel graduates' average score was 2142.2, which was 138.7 points above the national average of 2003.5. Currently 65-70 students are enrolled in Bethel's nursing program.

## Day-care centers bring education to Thai children

Bangkok, Thailand (MCC)—Bamboo scaffolds surround the partially completed concrete building where construction workers hammer and saw. Outside this scaffold wall, the workers' children play among jagged pieces of broken brick and concrete, lumber, nails and noise.

But at five construction sites in Bangkok, workers' children spend their days learning their ABCs and practicing their arithmetic in a small wooden day-care center at the edge of the construction site.

Foundation for Children (FFC), a Thai organization committed to helping poor children in Thailand, has set up these day-care centers so that the children living there can receive an education.

These children are not registered with the government and so they cannot attend the Bangkok schools, explains Rangsima Limpisawas, FFC staff member who visited the Mennonite Central Committee office in Akron, Pa., in December 1983.

Their parents, poor migrant workers, came from the countryside by bus to Bangkok, carrying one bag of possessions and looking for a job. Most of them find work at one of the many construction sites in this growing city, she continues, but a life of ease does not follow. They live in 9-by-12-foot houses, built on the construction site for the 200 to 500 families working there. They have no identification papers; they receive no contracts and are paid less than the legally required minimum wage.

The FFC day-care centers are really small schools, Limpisawas says. The children, most of whom have never been to school, attend five days a week from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. A trained teacher and assistant teach them reading, writing, math, music and subjects taught in any Thai school. The children and teachers also visit Bangkok museums, zoos and playgrounds.

In 1984, MCC will contribute $2,500 to FFC to pay the salary of one of the teachers at these construction site schools.

The construction company provides the building where the children meet, plus chairs and tables. Some companies even provide the books and tablets that the children use. The classrooms are equipped with blackboards, pencils, colored pencils, notebooks, pictures, books—all the things the children need to learn, Limpisawas reports.

Lunches are also a cooperative venture. The children bring rice from home; FFC provides cooked eggs, vegetables and lentils for the children to eat with the rice.

Construction site schools are not the only projects operated by FFC. During her visit to Akron, Limpisawas also talked about the work at the Sunflower Home of Malnourished Children, an FFC nursery started in 1978 when the Thai Ministry of Public Health reported that about 55,000 Thai children die each year from malnutrition.

Other FFC projects include a boarding school, a Children's Rights Protection program and a village lunch program.


### Business manager - fund raiser

**Swift Current Bible Institute** is receiving applications for the position of business manager-fund raiser.

Person must have bookkeeping experience and be skilled in public relations.

Position available **May 1, 1984**.

Apply to:
David Ortis, principal
Swift Current Bible Institute
Box 1268
Swift Current, SK S9H 3X4.


## *Mennonite church in Ethiopia still needing prayer*

Newton, Kan.—For more than two years now churches have been closed and church leaders have been detained by the Marxist government of Ethiopia. According to a Lutheran World Federation report, the government has taken actions against the 550,000-member Evangelical Church known as *Mekane Yesus* and is trying to close down Baptist, Mennonite and Pentecostal churches and limit the work of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. *The Christian Science Monitor* reported recently that some 284 of the 350 Mekane Yesus churches have been closed.

Harold Reed and Hershey Leaman, administrators of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities in Salunga, Pa., visited Ethiopia in November 1983. In a telephone interview Jan. 13, Reed reported that the situation has not changed significantly from a year before. He said that he felt that things were "tightening a bit," but that he couldn't give any specifics to substantiate his feeling. The EMBMC has relationships with the Meserete Kristos Church, the Mennonite church in Ethiopia, a body of 14 congregations and 7,000 members.

One MKC leader who had been detained was unexpectedly released in September. Neither he nor anyone in the church knows the reason, Reed said. Other leaders remain in prison. The MKC is reluctant to publicize the situation, Reed said, except as a means to request continued prayer on the part of other Christians for the Ethiopian church.

Ethiopia is 31 percent Muslim, 49 percent Orthodox and 3.5 percent Protestant. Despite the imprisonment of many pastors and lay leaders and the harassment of members, says the *Christian Science Monitor*, the churches continue to grow. *Gordon Houser*

**About 100 Catholic and Protestant women,** on their way to a five-day prayer vigil at two U.S. military bases in Honduras, were refused permission to board their flight from New Orleans on Dec. 5, 1983, by order of the president of Honduras. The approximately 150 women taking part in the planned vigil were to arrive in Tegucigalpa on Dec. 5 and pray at the U.S. army base in Talmerola and the navy base in San Lorenzo, near the El Salvador border.

**Several Church of Sweden leaders** together with several leaders from the free churches in Sweden engaged in a two-day fast recently in order to show solidarity with the starving people in the world. The event that triggered the symbolic action was the Swedish government's decision to cut its foreign aid program to the Third World. Never before have the leading members of the Christian churches in Sweden, with the archbishop of the Church of Sweden leading, engaged in a similar dramatic demonstration against a government decision.

**A coup** on Dec. 31, 1983, removed Nigerian civilian president Shehu Shagari from office. A military communique explained the reason for the near-bloodless coup: "You are all living witnesses to the grave economic predicament and uncertainty which an inept and corrupt leadership has imposed on our beloved nation for the past four years." Mennonite Central Committee has worked in Nigeria since 1963 and has programs in education, health and agriculture in cooperation with the local Nigerian church. A message from the American consulate in Kaduna, Nigeria, reported that all MCC workers "are safe and well."

## Workers providing health care 'where there is no doctor'

Putussibau, Indonesia (MCC)—"*Mint Ibu datang. Mama keras sakit dada* (Please come quickly. Mama's real sick in the chest.)," Ibu Sian's small daughter called as she rushed into Dorothy and Luke Beidler's kitchen.

The Beidlers, Mennonite workers cosponsored by Mennonite Central Committee and Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, live in a house-on-stilts in the riverside village of Nanga Suay deep in the interior of Kalimantan, Indonesia.

They are planting churches among the Kantú people as part of a larger team of Indonesian workers with PIPKA, the mission board of the Muria Indonesian Mennonite Church. (PIPKA is an acronym for Pengutusan Injil dan Pelayanan Kasih, which means Sending, Gospel, Ministry, Love.)

Dorothy slid her well-worn medical guide, Werner's *Where There Is No Doctor*, off the shelf and scanned the section on respiratory problems. A quick glance in her medicine cabinet revealed no penicillin so, hastily substituting sulfa, she joined the child in the trek to where the mother lay waiting.

Scenes like the above, says Dorothy, occur on the average of twice a month in this West Kalimantan village. When the inevitable knock comes at the door in the middle of the night, Dorothy admits to feeling apprehensive and helpless. Because she has had no formal medical training, she must rely on her medical guide, previous experiences and common sense. Yet despite these feelings of inadequacy, she feels it imperative to become involved. And, she says, more often than not, the treatment she administers proves effective in alleviating the health problem. Seriously ill patients are taken up the river for treatment whenever possible.

When Dorothy reached Ibu Sian's longhouse, she found 34 people clustered around the sick woman, who lay on a floor mat, her chest heaving rapidly. She helped Ibu Sian take the sulfa medicine, prayed briefly for her well-being and then sat quietly by her side before asking permission to leave.

*Beidler in front of her house in Kalimantan*

Ibu Sian had a comfortable night and her chest pains subsided. Dorothy offered a prayer of thanks. Earlier experiences had not always turned out so favorably. Dorothy recalls one emergency call several years ago when they were new in village work.

"When I reached the house, the sick infant looked like a wizened old man. Being new here, and not knowing what else to do, I gave it baby aspirin. It died within the hour. I now know the child was suffering from dehydration and should have been treated for that."

"Nurse" Beidler commonly treats medical ailments that include fevers (probably malaria), stomach pains, backache, diarrhea, worms, skin problems, boils, rashes, pink eye and fainting spells.

Traditionally, the Kantú people, who adhere to animistic beliefs, have been extremely frightened by illness of any kind because of their fear of the spirit world. Now, however, in the Kantú villages that have converted to Christianity, the Beidlers and their Indonesian PIPKA team members pray over the sick and help the new Kantú Christians understand sickness and death not as a punishment from the malevolent spirit world but as part of the permissive will of God within the framework of the natural created order.

Although the primary focus of the PIPKA team is church planting, they realize that health care is imperative in remote villages. Thus they have developed a health program, largely preventive in nature, which has become an effective branch of their ministry.

Dorothy and the other PIPKA team members welcome the opportunity to be involved in preventive health care. They weigh children, conduct vaccination programs and teach the women about nutrition, dehydration, malaria prevention and cleanliness.

And when they receive urgent calls for help and treatment, all of them—as untrained medical workers—feel impelled to respond.

"Each time I see someone scrambling up the notched log that leads to our front porch, my heart sinks as I wonder, 'What can it be this time?' " confesses Dorothy. "And each time God graciously helps me keep sufficiently calm as I make my non-professional diagnosis and provide a treatment." *Mary Burkholder*

**Two Canadian Members of Parliament** who traveled to Central America early in December 1983 came back with a message that Nicaragua wants peace. Regarding the concern that Nicaragua might become a "base for . . . subversive action in the whole region," they said Nicaragua had given numerous assurances that they would "not permit foreign military bases on their soil" and "not send arms to neighboring countries." The two MPs called on the Canadian government to speak against the U.S. policy at the United Nations, to set up an embassy in Nicaragua to better listen to developments there and to give more economic aid to that country.

**Canadian Protestant and Catholic** church leaders met with Prime Minister Trudeau, Tory disarmament representative Joe Clark and other political leaders in mid-December 1983. In an 11-page brief, written by Mennonite Ernie Regehr, they referred to God's call to do justice to all people, to be good stewards of the earth, and that in Christ there is no east or west, no "division of the world into allies and enemies." They described an increasing readiness by both superpowers to use nuclear weapons not only to deter but to threaten and actually fight a nuclear war, charging that the American MX, Pershing II and cruise missiles illustrated this trend.

"**At least 14,000 people** could be saved each year if everyone wore their safety belts in motor vehicles," states a release from the U.S. National Safety Council. Seat belts, smoke detectors, drinking and driving, and proper winter clothing are four emphases suggested for this year's sixth annual observance of National Safety Sabbath, Feb. 10-14.

# Preparing handicapped children in Atlanta for school

Atlanta (MCC U.S.)—Preparing young children to enter public school is often a natural, exciting task.

But for Donna Heinrichs, a Mennonite Central Committee U.S. volunteer, the task requires extra patience, kindness and love.

Heinrichs, who is from Winnipeg, works at the Cerebral Palsy Center here helping 14 children with mental and physical handicaps prepare for public school.

The Cerebral Palsy Center, officially named the Children's Rehabilitation Center, helps children with a variety of handicaps, not just cerebral palsy. It accepts developmentally delayed children, up to the age of six, who score below 70 on IQ tests.

Children at the center include those with Down's syndrome and other genetic disorders, cerebral palsy, fetal alcoholism, mental retardation, birth trauma, blindness or deafness. Most of the children, explains Heinrichs, have more than one handicap.

Heinrichs works as a classroom teacher at the center, teaching 14 students ages 4 to 6. She teaches them new words and phrases, counting and enunciation. She shows them how to play together, take turns and function in a group. Some of them need to learn to play with toys. They think toys are only to be banged, sucked or thrown, she explains.

Others in her class are severely handicapped. These children need to learn to sit and hold their heads up, she explains, rather than sprawl on the floor. Others need to learn to feed themselves.

Children at the center are grouped according to age. "We have an infant room, two preschool rooms and three prekindergarten rooms. At age 6 the children graduate to public school," Heinrichs says.

The center also has a Follow-Along program. In this program people working with the center visit the public school regularly during the child's first four months to help ease the adjustment.

The public school places center graduates in special classrooms. A few of them attend regular classrooms for a short period of time each day to study subjects in which they excel. This process, known as mainstreaming, helps handicapped children become better adjusted to normal life.

Adjusting to public school is difficult for developmentally delayed children. The handicapped child, explains Heinrichs, needs a regular, consistent schedule. The center tries to accommodate this need by not recessing for long Christmas or Easter vacations and by continuing classes during the summer. "Consistency is good for the children," says Heinrichs. "Even a weekend away from the school schedule is hard [for them]."

Communication between the public schools and the Cerebral Palsy Center is essential. "We need feedback from the public schools and we need to know what the skill level requirements are," Heinrichs says. "What is 'brilliant' at the center is often not normal."

Heinrichs also finds it helpful to spend time observing children who do not attend the center. She often discovers that the children in her classroom are normal socially or mentally and that their physical disability is the main problem. "It is also helpful to realize that some of the 'undesirable' actions displayed by the children in my classroom are quite normal," she adds.

A group of Atlanta parents who had children with cerebral palsy opened the Cerebral Palsy Center in 1949 at St. Luke's Episcopal Church. The center eventually outgrew the facilities at St. Luke's and moved to its present location—1815 Ponce De Leon Avenue, N.E., Atlanta. *Marcia Heirman*

*Donna Heinrichs, left, with students at the Cerebral Palsy Center in Atlanta*

**More than 35 individuals** and organizations, including three religious groups, have sued the Reagan administration for denying visas to Nicaragua's interior minister, two Cubans and the widow of slain Chilean president Salvador Allende. In suits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union, they charged that the administration was using its visa authority to "shape and limit the public debate in the United States." "Such a pattern of ideological exclusions is inconsistent with the basic premises of a free society," the suit said.

**Memorial services** for Elaine Dirks, missionary to Taiwan with her husband, Otto, from 1968-1980, were held at four different locations in Taiwan recently. Dirks died Nov. 15, 1983, in St. Catharines, Ont., from cancer. The Fu-An Mennonite Church in Hualien, which the Dirks started in 1978, paid tribute to Elaine Nov. 20, 1983. Missionary coworkers set aside a special time Nov. 27 to remember her. On Dec. 11 the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan held a special memorial service at the Ta-tung Mennonite Church in Taipei. New Dawn Development Centre, which Dirks helped established, honored her Dec. 17.

*Participants at the Ta-Tung Mennonite Church in Taipei, Taiwan, honor Elaine Dirks.*

# calendar

Feb. 9-10—Mennonite Disaster Service annual meeting, Upland, Calif.

Feb. 16-19—Perspective '84, Minneapolis

March 2-6—Council of Commissions, Newton, Kan.

**Canada**

Feb. 2-5—CMC Council of Boards, Winnipeg

Feb. 10-12—United Mennonite Churches of British Columbia, Chilliwack

Feb. 24-26—Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba, Winnipeg

Feb. 24-26—Conference of the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario, Leamington

Feb. 24-26—Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan, Rosthern

March 9-11—Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Edmonton

**Western**

Feb. 25—MCC Central States annual meeting, Fairview, Okla.

# ministers

*Tom Friesen*, who has worked 4½ years with Mennonite Urban Ministry, an inner-city program in Denver, has resigned effective in June.

*Lois Janzen* resigned as pastor at Haight-Ashbury Fellowship, San Francisco, Dec. 1. *Ruth Buxman*, a graduate nurse with a degree from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Calif., is serving as interim pastor.

*Stephen Penner* became pastor at Prescott (Ariz.) Church Nov. 20, 1983. He attended Goshen Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and graduated from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary,

*Steelberg*

*Unger*

Fresno, Calif. He and his wife, Glena, have served with Mennonite Central Committee in Zaire, Chad and Upper Volta.

*Don Steelberg* will become pastor at Lorraine Avenue Church, Wichita, Kan., July 1. He formerly served as pastor at First Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

*Jakob* and *Elfrieda Thielmann*, who have served as a pastoral team at Cedar Valley Church, Mission, B.C., have begun serving the Mennonite Brethren congregation in Linz, Austria, under Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services.

# workers

*Lester Ewy*, Partridge, Kan., has been appointed chairman for Bethel College's (North Newton, Kan.) three-year centennial fund drive.

*James Kratz* was appointed executive


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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**"To All the World with All the Gospel"** will be the theme for a special Festival of World Mission to be held at First Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., March 2-4. Planned jointly by First Mennonite Church and General Conference's central offices, the three-day event will focus on reporting from mission fields, both overseas and North American, and the challenges faced by workers and missionary candidates in their assignments. Services will begin at 7:00 each evening. Levi Keidel, author, missiologist and veteran missionary to Zaire, will be keynote speaker for each of the evening programs.

# RECORD

vice president of Mennonite Mutual Aid, Goshen, Ind., on Nov. 18, 1983. Kratz is responsible for the direction of the programs and activities of the organization's three divisions—administrative, financial and mutual aid services.

*Bert Lobe*, Mennonite Central Committee secretary for Southeast Asia, will join MCC Canada in September as director of overseas services. He will replace *John Wieler*.

*Neil Reimer*, recently returned from a one-year Eastern Mennonite Board of Mission assignment in Somalia, will join Mennonite Central Committee Ontario as service programs coordinator in May.

*Reginald Toews*, Mennonite Central Committee executive secretary, has announced that he is not available for reappointment at the end of his current three-year term, which ends January 1985.

*Paul Unger* has been named director of development at Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., beginning March 15.

## Discover your heritage

July 9-Aug. 5, 1984
(several time options within these dates)

Rome, Salzburg, Oberammergau Passion Play, Zurich, Strasbourg (MWC XI), Paris, Amsterdam, Witmarsum

Contact:
Bernie Wiebe
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4
204/888-6781 (office)
204/475-2615 (home)

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Developmentally Disabled Study Book

"We no longer live in the dark ages but we continue to adhere to ancient myths that persons with handicaps are sick, have no or little mental capacities or are eternal children on whom we are to have pity." Dean Bartel writes these words in his foreword to *Celebrating Differences*. This adult study book is designed to raise awareness of the mentally and physically handicapped persons in our congregations. Written by 13 different writers and edited by Aldred Neufeldt this 11-chapter book explores the theology and history of handicapism and deals with questions such as the conversion and baptism of mentally handicapped persons and accessibility of church buildings for persons with physical disabilities.

A leader's guide written by Nancy and Dennis Becker will accompany the study book. Available in summer 1984.

## Meet Brent Sprunger,

Marketing Manager for Faith and Life Press and Manager of the Faith and Life Bookstore in Newton, Kan. As Marketing Manager Brent is responsible for marketing Faith and Life Press books to bookstores, distributors and churches. Brent also oversees the operation of two Faith and Life Bookstores, one in Newton, Kan. (which he also manages) and one in Berne, Ind. Brent began his responsibilities with Faith and Life Press in April 1983.

## COE Calendar

**February**
16-19 PERSPECTIVE '84 (Minneapolis)
26 Church School Day
**March-April**
30,31,1 Eastern Region Student and Young Adult Conference
**April**
1-6 Project: Teach (Owen Sound, Ont.)
**Marriage Encounter Schedule**
3/2-4 Niagara Falls, Ont.; 3/16-18 North Newton, Kan., Salem, Ore., 4/13-15 Spruce Lake, Pa

## Project: Teach

Many congregations encourage and financially assist their teachers to attend Project: Teach. Some congregations have sponsored one of their teachers, who has in turn helped and inspired others to try new methods. Teachers of all levels, nursery to adult, have in the past gained new insights and developed new skills in the week-long learning experience. There are special classes for superintendents and pastors as well.

Foundation Series is used as the basic curriculum; the revised children's Foundation Series will be introduced.

Project: Teach, 1984, will be held April 1-6 at Camp Ambassador, Owen Sound, Ontario. Gerry Vandeworp and J. W. Sprunger are the directors. The deadline for applications is March 15. Call or write for brochures or more detailed information.

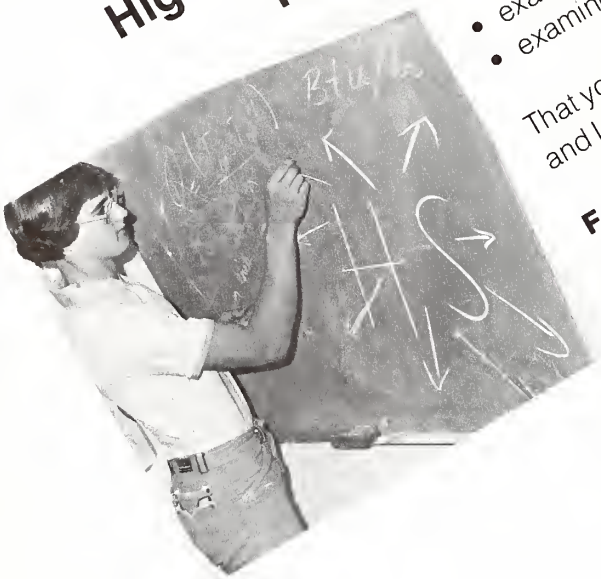
**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:11

# The Foundation Series

## Curriculum for High School Youth



**Purpose:**
- explore the teachings of the Scriptures
- examine beliefs of the Christian faith
- examine the emphases of the Anabaptist tradition

That youth may commit their way to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and to the church as the people of God.

**Format:**
- 4-year study for Grades 9-12
- Each quarter has 2 units of 6 or 7 sessions
- 14 units are biblical studies; 9 deal with "Examining Our Beliefs"; 9 are about "Living in Today's World"

**Teacher Training:**
*Called To Teach Youth*—a 6-session course designed to help teachers of youth teach Foundation Series.

The Foundation Series for Youth takes into account the aspirations, questions and concerns of youth; it speaks their language.

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722 Main Street, Box 347
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## Mollenkott and persecution

Thank you for the interview with Virginia Mollenkott (Nov. 22, 1983, issue). It was interesting and stimulating, as are her books. However, it is one thing to hear her views, it is quite another to make her the Bible teacher for a large gathering of impressionable young people. If the Bible can be made to teach what Virginia Mollenkott says in *Women, Men and the Bible* and *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?*, it can be made to teach anything. I do not think it is wise for General Conference people to send young people to Minneapolis.

Which brings up Steve Dick's letter (p. 571 of the same issue). The homosexuality debate evoked, in his mind, parallels with McCarthy, the KKK and the American Nazis. Perhaps the sad history of intolerance makes the language of persecution flow too readily from our lips and pens. Am I *persecuting* Virginia Mollenkott by disagreeing with her? Is she persecuting me? No. Are we persecuting avowed homosexuals by saying homosexual acts are sinful or by granting that property owners may have a point when they want the right not to rent their property for the use of what they consider immoral acts? I think not. *Monty Ledford, Route 2, Kempton, PA 19529*

Dec. 20

## Do we need a Father God?

I express my appreciation to Dick Rempel for his gracious letter (Oct. 11, 1983, issue) in which he expresses his concern of gender in reference to God. Harry Loewen in response (Dec. 6, 1983, issue) challenges Dick to think further on this matter.

Wherever Jesus (a male) went, he elevated the abused status of women, and we must do the same today in every honorable way. Recognizing the neuter gender used of the Holy Spirit in the original languages of Scripture and a few female characteristics also used to describe the Creator, let us not lose sight of Jesus' constant references to God as Father. In our pell mell race to appear relevant to the current concerns of the unbelieving world around us, are some willing to sacrifice the concept of God as Father? *Mal J. Braun, Site 1, Route 4, Gordon Road, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7R3*

Dec. 29


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| | |
|---|---|
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| Edmonton | **Jubilee Auditorium**<br>Sunday, Feb. 12, 8 p.m.<br>(Tickets available at Bass Agencies) |
| Vancouver | **Queen Elizabeth Theatre**<br>Saturday, Feb. 18, 8 p.m.<br>(Tickets available at the Vancouver Ticket Centre) |
| St. Catharines, Ont. | **Shaw Festival Theatre**<br>Sunday, Feb. 26, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.<br>(Tickets available at Fellowship Book Centre) |
| Toronto | **Ontario Science Centre**<br>Monday, Feb. 27, 8 p.m.<br>(Tickets available at Toronto United Mennonite Church) |
| Kitchener, Ont. | **University of Waterloo**<br>Saturday, March 3, 8 p.m.<br>Sunday, March 4, 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.<br>(Tickets available at Mennonite Credit Unions) |
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# Protestantism 1983

*Donovan E. Smucker*

The predominantly Protestant World Council of Churches met in Vancouver July 24-Aug. 10, providing the leading religious event of the year. Four thousand people represented 301 member churches from over 100 countries of the world.

After the earlier media attacks on the WCC, it was not surprising to see pickets led by three Protestant fundamentalists: Ian Paisley of Northern Ireland, Carl McIntyre and Bob Jones, Jr. Because picket placards make good copy, the trio of critics received more publicity the first three days than the large council.

The main impression in this large assembly is the global nature of Christianity: North America, Europe, South America, Africa, Asia and Oceania were represented. No other world religion has become indigenous in so many cultures nor articulate in so many languages. But the very success of Christianity creates problems of unity especially in the proliferation of churches. There was evidence that the report on "Baptism, Eucharist (Communion) and Ministry" reflects growing but not complete agreement. Likewise the new liturgy used at the council indicated increasing unity on worship questions.

The 150 Orthodox delegates from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have survived persecution and restraint but were not eager to hear the WCC criticize their nations' policies.

The most basic tension in the council was between peace and justice. The highly developed countries are chiefly worried about the nuclear apocalypse. The Third World often views this as a remote issue while poverty and injustice are persistent and pervasive.

Moderator Ted Scott, head of the Anglican (Episcopal) Church of Canada, declared that today neither capitalism nor communism satisfy the deepest human aspirations.

The major event in Mennonite life during 1983 was the meeting in Bethlehem, Pa., of the two largest conferences. The growing unity was not consummated in organic union, but Bethlehem was a step in that direction. Meanwhile Mennonite Central Committee, the Associated Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind., music, publications, health services and schools make Mennonite cooperation a growing reality. The schism from the Russian experience was discussed by General Conference and Mennonite Brethren leaders at Winnipeg in early November. A press conference on Oct. 26 in Strasbourg permitted European media to grasp the nature and scope of the next Mennonite World Conference.

*A youth discussion at Bethlehem '83, the first joint MC/GC convention*

*1983 marked the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther. He was born in this house on Nov. 10, 1483.*

There were other significant Protestant developments overseas. Guatemala's born-again president Efrain Rios Montt, who came to power in a military coup early in 1982, was overthrown by his own officer corps led by General Mejia. The new regime does not represent any improvement in human rights, but it is to their credit that ex-president Montt was not assassinated. A Presbyterian theologian from Chicago, Bruce Rigdon, was the major consultant to the National Broadcasting Company for its two-part RV presentation in July on the vigor of the churches in Russia despite 65 years of official atheist policy. When Vice President Bush went to Krefeld, Germany, to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the first German migration to America, he was greeted by angry demonstrators who feared the coming of U.S. missiles. This demonstration became violent. All this could not obscure the fact that in 1683 the good ship *Concord* arrived in Philadelphia with 13 Mennonite and Quaker families from Krefeld. Today the United States has 52 million citizens of German descent.

During July the Soviet government permitted seven Pentecostals to leave for Israel after five years of asylum in the U.S. embassy in Moscow. The Pentecostals chose Israel because of its special place in biblical prophecy. A melancholy chapter in Jewish-Christian relations was the flap in Eckville, Alta., where a

Protestant teacher in the high school taught that the mass extermination of the German Jews was a highly exaggerated part of the so-called Jewish conspiracy. To encounter the realities of history, a Calgary businessman offered a two-week trip to the German death camp at Dachau for two Eckville high school students. One of the students, Katrina Milaney, toured the grisly remains of mass murder and commented, "I think I know the truth now. It was devastating." On the other side of the ledger was a beautiful incident at the Vancouver WCC, where fraternal delegate Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum held the little baby of a black woman from Zimbabwe while she addressed the assembly.

Prominent Protestant names figured in two 1983 exemption cases. Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral at Garden Grove, Calif., lost its property tax exemption because the state tax assessor ruled that the church sponsored many secular events and charged admission. Schuller has the largest audience of any electronic preacher. His church of 10,000 members has an annual income of $30 million. In another case Bob Jones University was refused tax-exempt status by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service because of the school's racist policies. Some civil libertarians are unhappy with the Bob Jones decision because of the fear that political orthodoxy, liberal or conservative, can become a condition for tax exemption.

*Justice was a prominent theme at the WCC sessions in Vancouver.*

The status of homosexuals remains divisive. An all-homosexual denomination applied to the National Council of Churches for membership. The council refused to act, sending the issue back to its 32 denominations for decision. Elsewhere, the Presbyterians and Methodists have refused to ordain homosexuals, even though both do not necessarily judge homosexuality as always sinful.

The retirement of Ted Patrick, the father of the modern anti-cult deprogramming or deconversion, symbolized the end of an era. The manhandling coercion, the kidnapping and physical restraint, and the absence of spiritual insight represented a dogmatic evangelistic approach that refused to examine unmet needs to which the new religions have catered. Today the word "cults" is often set aside for the term "new religions." An article in *Christianity Today* supported this new approach. The author was J. Gordon Melton, director of the Institute for the Study of American Religion.

Occasionally there is an incident which fans the fear of another Jim Jones tragedy. Near Grand Rapids, Mich., is a religious colony called Black Hebrew Israelite Jews or The House of Judah. Last summer William A. Lewis, the 61-year-old leader of the group, was arrested after being charged with child cruelty in the beating to death of a 12-year-old member of the Black Israelites. A week later the court ordered the evacuation of all the children—66 in number—from the colony. The children became wards of the juvenile court.

On Aug. 27 Coretta Scott King led the new march on Washington 20 years after Martin Luther King's historic march in 1963. Cornelius Hendricks, a Chicago black man, said prior to the march, "I'm not as naive, idealistic or hopeful as I was in 1963, although I still cling to King's dream of a better tomorrow."

*Although not part of Protestantism, the pastoral letter from U.S. Catholic bishops condemning nuclear war was, for many, the most important story from the world of religion in '83.*

*Donovan E. Smucker, 117 S. Spring St., Bluffton, OH 45817, is professor emeritus of social science at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., and has been serving as interim pastor of First Mennonite Church at Bluffton.*

## Paul in the city

**The First Urban Christians: the Social World of the Apostle Paul** *by Wayne A. Meeks (Yale University Press, 1983, 299 pages)*

*Reviewed by Willard M. Swartley, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517*

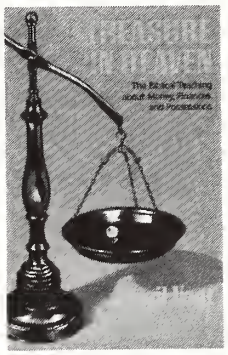
This book marks a new level of maturity in the rapidly growing body of New Testament literature on the social dimensions of the early Christian communities and their environment.

Indebted to E. A. Judge, Gerd Theissen and other social world studies, Meeks gives the reader six windows through which to view the social world of Pauline Christianity: the urban environment of Pauline Christianity; the social level of Pauline Christians; the formation of the *ekklesia*; the governance of the Christian communities; the function of the rituals of the communities, especially baptism and Lord's Supper; and the patterns of belief and life. To each Meeks devotes a chapter.

Such a social history approach to New Testament studies seeks to provide alternative learning to the usual introductions, theologies and ethics books on early Christianity. It focuses on the "ordinary patterns of life" and seeks "to discern the texture of life in particular times and . . . places" (p. 2). Hence Meeks discusses *why* Paul selected urban centers for witness, *how* he made connections, *who* responded—and here factors of social class, status and mobility are considered. The social mobility of women in the Roman world and the popularity of voluntary associations (clubs) are assessed in relation to early Christian growth.

Meeks' analysis of the social level of the urban Christians, based upon hints in Paul's letters for 30 of the 65 named individuals, is especially illuminating. The range of social class is present: from Erastus, the city treasurer of Corinth, and the independent mobile patroness-leader Phoebe, on the one end, to slaves (Onesimus) on the other. Here, though, I must register caution: since the analysis focuses on named individuals, the resultant portrait is likely skewed toward the upper side of the *actual* socioeconomic level of the congregation since those named were the leaders, the mobile people or those rich enough to have houses large enough for house churches.

Many fresh perspectives turn up in Meeks' work, among which are the role of social and economic factors in the conflict at Corinth, the importance of social cohesion and group solidarity in the spawning network of *ekklesia* communities (reinforced by the Christians' rituals), the role of order, authority and government in conflict resolution, and correlations made between belief and social expression.




Meeks' contribution is helpful and illuminating. It is not to be read as a statement of normative theology, ethics or even Christian social values. But it can and will fruitfully stimulate our efforts to determine how Christian faith and social experience meaningfully intersect. Though written for the scholarly guild, the book merits the attention of pastors and intellectually ambitious lay leaders. It can provide some spice for sermons.

## Jesus and economics

**Treasure in Heaven: the Biblical Teaching about Money, Finances and Possessions** *by Virgil Vogt (Servant Books, 1982, 120 pages)*

*Reviewed by Calvin Redekop, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6*

The subtitle of Vogt's book continues to concern us and rightly so, for our salvation and that of the rest of the world hinges on what we think that teaching is.

Vogt begins from the premise that the economic aspects of human history are more important and urgent than they have ever been (pp. 8-10) and that Jesus' teachings on the subject are more desperately needed than ever before. They are not followed, however, because of their radical nature. Vogt assumes that Jesus has a clear position and teaching on economics and invites us to follow his (Vogt's) version.

The Old Testament anticipates Jesus' teaching with the emphasis on abundance and prosperity for his people. "God will provide" is the Old Testament theme. Jesus' central emphasis is that of laying up spiritual treasures rather than earthly ones which fade and disappear ("We are called to sell our possessions, give alms and lay up treasures in heaven," p. 32). Vogt reiterates that God will provide (e.g. p. 40) if only we will let go and share with others. "Renunciation of all things is what he (Jesus) seeks at the foundation of our Christian experience" (p. 44).

Stewardship is given a new twist, not as shepherding the material elements, but "the mysteries of God" i.e., the kingdom of God.

This book can be read at several levels. As a "confession" it provides insights and inspiration. As an "inspirational book" it "lifts up the drooping arms," as for example the section on borrowing and lending, which I find original and provocative.

At the level of an analysis of Jesus' teaching on economics, or as "the biblical teaching . . ." a la the subtitle, or as an outline or abstract of the Christian understanding of faith and economics, it is weak. Vogt does not face the issue of the production of goods, services and opportunities for the utilization of the kingdom of God which he stresses so centrally and with which we all agree. That economists who are Christian would find his economics absurd is not relevant here. What I am concerned about is that the author does not tell us anything about the Christian's responsibility in the productive sphere except to continually aver that "God will provide." How does he do it? Through pagans?

I have a sneaking suspicion that Vogt is glad the "infidel" is productive, since otherwise Christians would have to face production as well as selling all. There is a dualism here which even the most staunch Anabaptists (Hutterites) couldn't abide, for they (the Hutterites) have no problem with producing.

I believe Jesus not only advocates selling all and giving all away (he did that); he also talked about feeding, leading, healing, and these take resources. He does not say that "the lost" were to do the producing and the Christians to do the giving; in fact, that creates an illogicality.

*Treasure in Heaven* is a provocative book, but not the last word on "the biblical teaching on money, finances and possessions."

# MEDITATION

## In prison for faith?

While traveling in England, my wife and I visited the beautiful cathedral and the adjacent castle in Lancaster. In the castle I entered the small cell where George Fox was held prisoner over 300 years ago because of his radical religious beliefs. In fact, so many Quakers were in prison there that they called one room "the Quaker room."

Down through the years many Mennonites were also imprisoned for their beliefs both in Europe and in the United States. Today in various lands there are still many devout people held in prison for their faith. I am asking myself if my faith is so radical that it might ever land me in prison.

*Ward W. Shelly*

## The elderly are needed

An Indian compared the place of the aged in native culture to their place in our dominant culture. He described how young native people gather respectfully around their old people, listen to their stories and absorb their accumulated wisdom. He said they often surround them up to the moment of death because of eagerness to learn all they can before the wisdom of the elderly disappears with their last breath.

Turning to consider our dominant culture, in which old people typically spend their last years secluded in a retirement center, the speaker then asked, "What good is it to be wise in your old age when you have no audience?"

Our elderly often end their days without an audience, segregated from the dynamic segments of society. My subsequent reflections have made me look at attitudes toward older people and at the attitudes of older people themselves.

We have been brought up to believe it our duty to visit our old people, and where possible we usually carry out that duty. But with what attitude? After visiting Uncle John or Aunt Mary, we come away feeling good about having made someone happy by our visit. Does the native people's idea of visiting the elderly with a view to sharing their wisdom ever occur to us? Do our elderly consider themselves repositories of wisdom needing to be passed on? It may be that through our modes of education we have come to rely on books to pass wisdom from generation to generation, thereby confusing, in many instances, information with wisdom.

Our culture has seemingly conditioned us to think that when we reach a certain age, no matter what our health situation, we cease to regard ourselves as participating, useful members of society. How many elderly people teach Sunday school classes where the lives of children and young people can be influenced? How many of our older members accept positions on our church boards where basic church policies are established? How many of our senior citizens, when asked to serve in some capacity, even if physically fit, reply, "I've served my time; now let the younger people take over"? Many elderly people reduce their church life to the worship and Sunday school hours. It may be that our concept of retiring from a job at a certain age has created an attitude which in many cases causes people to retire from more than just work.

Let's re-examine the relationships of the younger generations to the elderly and encourage the elderly to consider the fact that society and the church benefit when all its people participate as fully as they are able.

*Anthony R. Epp*

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We would expect illness to be a small matter in affluent countries like Canada and the United States. Nutritious foods are available to us and we have time to care for our bodies.

The records show that we are preoccupied with health problems. Rare is the person who does not need some kind of medical attention each year. Our hospitals are full.

Is health care or wellness care part of Christian stewardship? Think of it as you read this issue.

And we have a host of stimulting articles on a variety of other topics.


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Erland Waltner's article is based on a presentation made to the Mennonite Health Association's annual convention at San Diego in March 1983. It is printed by permission.

CORRECTIONS

In our Dec. 20, 1983, issue Elfrieda Schroeder was mistakenly identified as a missionary under Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. She works under the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions and Services.

In our Jan. 17 issue we mistakenly exchanged the cutlines for the photo on p. 26 and the bottom photo on p. 28. Thus the granary at Petershagen is shown on p. 26.


THE MENNONITE

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# editorial

## Questions I wish I could ask

I get asked many questions. Many have no direct connection to *The Mennonite*. But people somehow think I should know the answers.

There have been many times over the past 7½ years (yes, it's that long since I became editor) that I too felt like asking some questions. Sometimes I didn't know who to ask; other times I was scared of the answers.

My commitment to the General Conference Mennonite Church has not changed over the years. I believe in our church family at all its levels. But I also believe in a certain style of faith and discipleship. I am convinced that Jesus' style of leadership was that of being transparently vulnerable. It was done deliberately and to be a model for his followers.

**Questions to GC leadership.** Our leadership people (probably more staff than elected leaders, but often both) too often act in secret.

On the Canadian level, important decisions are being made about publications. I attended the General Board session prior to this action. The subject was not mentioned. All we've been able to get as of this writing is what the rumor mill passes on. Why?

When Pacific District had some problems about the sexuality question, a statement was constructed by the executive. Was it impossible to speak openly with the brothers and sisters?

I preach in 30-35 different GC churches annually. There I hear urgent calls for itinerant workers in evangelism, family, Bible study and other special ministries. Yet it seems we appoint more new staff who are excellent *office* and *committee* workers (at all levels of our conferences). But then I hear dismay in our offices about the non-Mennonite resources so frequently being called upon in our churches. Can you explain?

Our two leadership training schools, MBS and CMBC, have super staff and good education programs. But when board meetings roll around, they seem to have the most "in camera" sessions, and when the press is permitted entrance we get the most admonitions, "This is not for publication." It blows my mind time and again. What kind of leadership model is this?

**Questions to MCC and other "peace" staff.** Last Oct. 13-15 I covered (for Meetinghouse) an MCC symposium on Central America. When more than 75 people from Canada and the United States convened, I couldn't believe my eyes. We have been happy about the new Hispanic churches and workers among us. But in a consultation on working with Spanish-speaking people in Central America, was even one Hispanic from Canada or the United States invited to participate?

We passed a strong "war tax" resolution at Bethlehem '83. About a fourth of GC delegates voted against it. What kind of efforts are being made to have dialogue with these people?

**Questions to missions staff.** It is gratifying to see the overseas and domestic outreach involvements of our General Conference. The record of people in MCC, VS, COM, CHM, NM, Umsiedler, media, church planting, chaplaincy and camps is a solid one.

But our global churches in Taiwan, Japan, India, Africa, Native Ministries, Latin America and Europe are maturing. Our relationship patterns to these churches seem bizarre. Umsiedler churches, even though we supposedly do all our overseas missions via COM, have to go to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada for any dialogue with us. Taiwanese churches who might want to relate to Chinese churches in the United States or Canada have to first go through COM, then CHM, and then to such churches.

Structures are never meant to be masters. They are to be facilitators. How do we justify the present maze to our sister churches that we planted and nurtured?

**Questions to GC members.** How is it that some people choose to become GC pastors or GC members and then see it as their primary calling to alienate whole congregations from the conference? Are you really so desperate in your faith that you can't let God's Spirit do the work of judgment? Isn't your calling to follow the example of Christ? Will you feel good if one day you stand before God (Matthew 25) and have to point only to a flock of GCs you thought might be erring and therefore you tried to lead them *your* way?

**Questions to myself.** Is it best to keep quiet? Am I as ready to hear your questions to me?

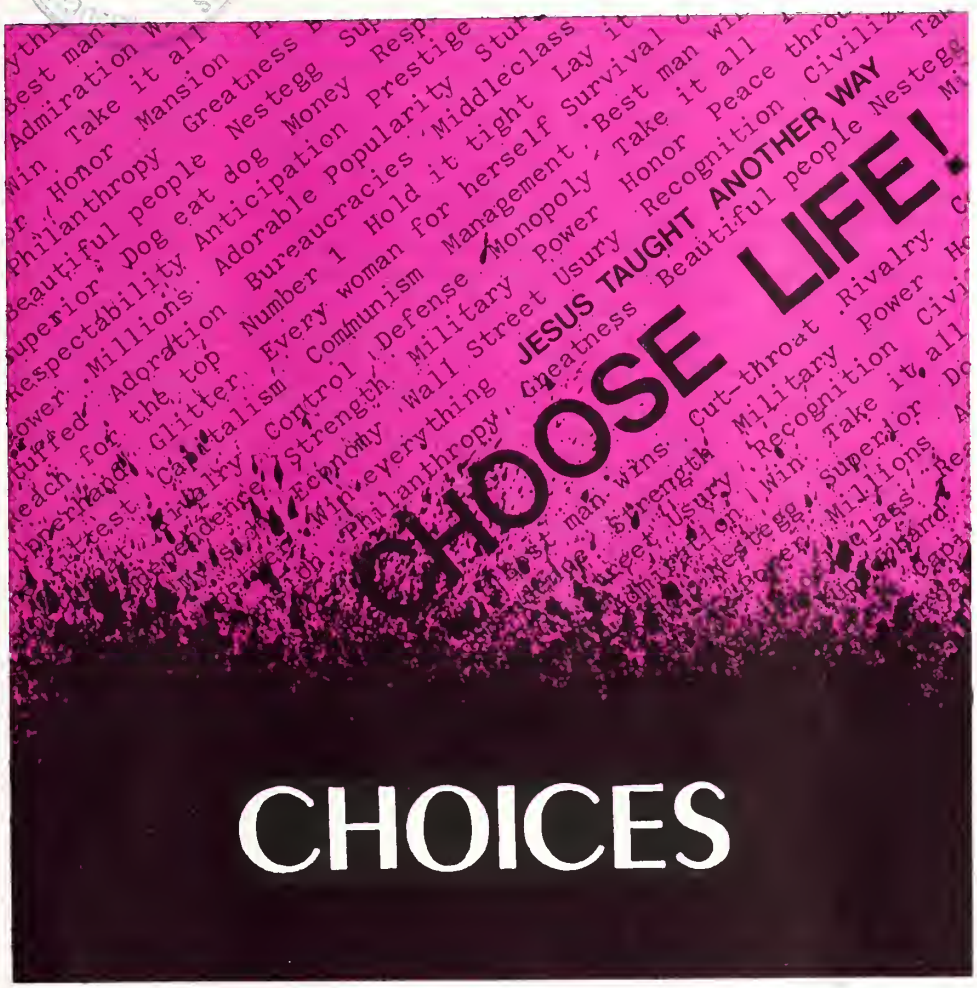
My prayer is to "always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence" (1 Peter 3:15). *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:04 FEBRUARY 14, 1984


FEB 16 '84





Mennonite Voluntary Service

*Ruth Teichroeb*

# MVS is a quilting of community

Monday evenings from September to December are quilting nights at the Welcome Inn. Inside the steepled, red-brick building on Wood Street, the women's group is cutting patches, piecing, sewing and tying knots in each colorful patchwork quilt. Over the past 16 years the faces around the tables have changed, but the ritual of women gathering for conversation and for quiltmaking endures.

The Welcome Inn is a church-sponsored community friendship center in the Hamilton (Ont.) North End. The history of the Welcome Inn is a unique partnership between Mennonite Voluntary Service and the Hamilton Mennonite Church.

The Welcome Inn began in the 1960s with the dreams of several people at Hamilton Mennonite Church who felt called to share God's good news by reaching out to people with needs in their own community. After exploring various outreach possibilities, the small congregation took on the task of sponsoring workers in the low-income North End neighborhood. Although Hamilton Mennonite had recently constructed their own building in a western suburb, their priority was to establish a Christian presence in an area with greater needs.

In 1966, Menno and Margaretha Ediger were invited to be the first directors of the Welcome Inn, and soon the first MVS workers arrived. Over 60 volunteers have staffed the Welcome Inn since those early days.

The Welcome Inn began as a storefront drop-in center on James Street. Doreen Davies, a North End resident, reflected back to her first contact with the Welcome Inn shortly after it opened. "I came there on a referral from a public health nurse. I needed help getting clothes for my seven children. When I met Margaretha, she made me feel comfortable right away. And I soon realized that I too could help at the Welcome Inn."

When urban renewal forced a relocation in 1970, the Welcome Inn moved to a building on Wood Street, purchased with assistance from the Conference of the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario. Ongoing financial support for the Welcome Inn has come from the larger Mennonite community.

In 1971, Hugo and Doreen Neufeld came to the leadership of Welcome Inn. Today the Inn is a hub of activity and community spirit for the North End. They have just moved several blocks down Wood Street to a rented church building which better accommodates their ministries.

There are after-school clubs for neighborhood children, weekly Bible studies, women's and men's groups, home and hospital visitations, and peace education in an elementary school. There is the Community Cupboard, a thrift store run in cooperation with the North End Christian Action. There are seasonal events like the Christmas bazaar, family camping trips and retreats at Silver Lake Camp.

Caring relationships are the heart of Welcome Inn. The door is always open for casual visits or a chance to talk about a problem. Standing beside people in their struggles helps them to discover God working in their lives. Kris Wagner, an MVS volunteer, said, "Friendship heals and empowers a person to reach out to others."

At the Christmas bazaar, Eleanor Buckle, a longtime friend of the Welcome Inn, took time out from selling hot dogs, chili and apple pie to share her feelings. "We've been through a lot together. I've had a lot of grief. But people have been there to share things with, whether going with me to visit my son in the hospital or coming to my wedding last April. The Welcome Inn has opened up a whole new life for us."

An outgrowth of the Welcome Inn has been the emergence of the Welcome Inn Church. Hugo and Doreen Neufeld serve as co-pastors of the congregation.

"The first day the Welcome Inn opened its doors, the church began to emerge," says Hugo Neufeld. Doreen Davies affirmed this observation. "I've always felt that the Welcome Inn was my church; now it really is."

MVS volunteers assist in all areas of congregational life at the Welcome Inn Church. Before Sunday morning services began there, the MVS workers usually worshiped at Hamilton Mennonite Church. This encouraged stronger ties between Hamilton Mennonite and the VS unit. With increasing involvement at Welcome Inn Church, the relationship with Hamilton Mennonite is more difficult to maintain.

Estelle Enns, a Hamilton Mennonite Church member and treasurer of the Welcome Inn for many years, commented on this shift. "It's been in the area of lifestyle that the MVS volunteers have challenged us. They prodded and pushed us to re-examine our lives. I miss that now."

Ruth Martin, chairperson of the Welcome Inn management board and a member at Hamilton Mennonite, also reflected on the changes. "Our church people miss the VS presence because it kept the Welcome Inn before us. We also miss the fresh blood that each volunteer brought into our congregation. But we consider the Welcome Inn to be a sister church. We struggle through these changes together."

Other worship options were explored prior to the establishment of the Welcome Inn Church. North End residents had been encouraged to attend Hamilton Mennonite, but transportation across the city was a problem. There were also difficulties in integrating people of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Doreen Neufeld commented on that gap. "As middle-class Mennonites, we strive for perfection, to do things well in our churches. When North End people go into a group like that, they are intimidated. There is little chance for them to develop their gifts."

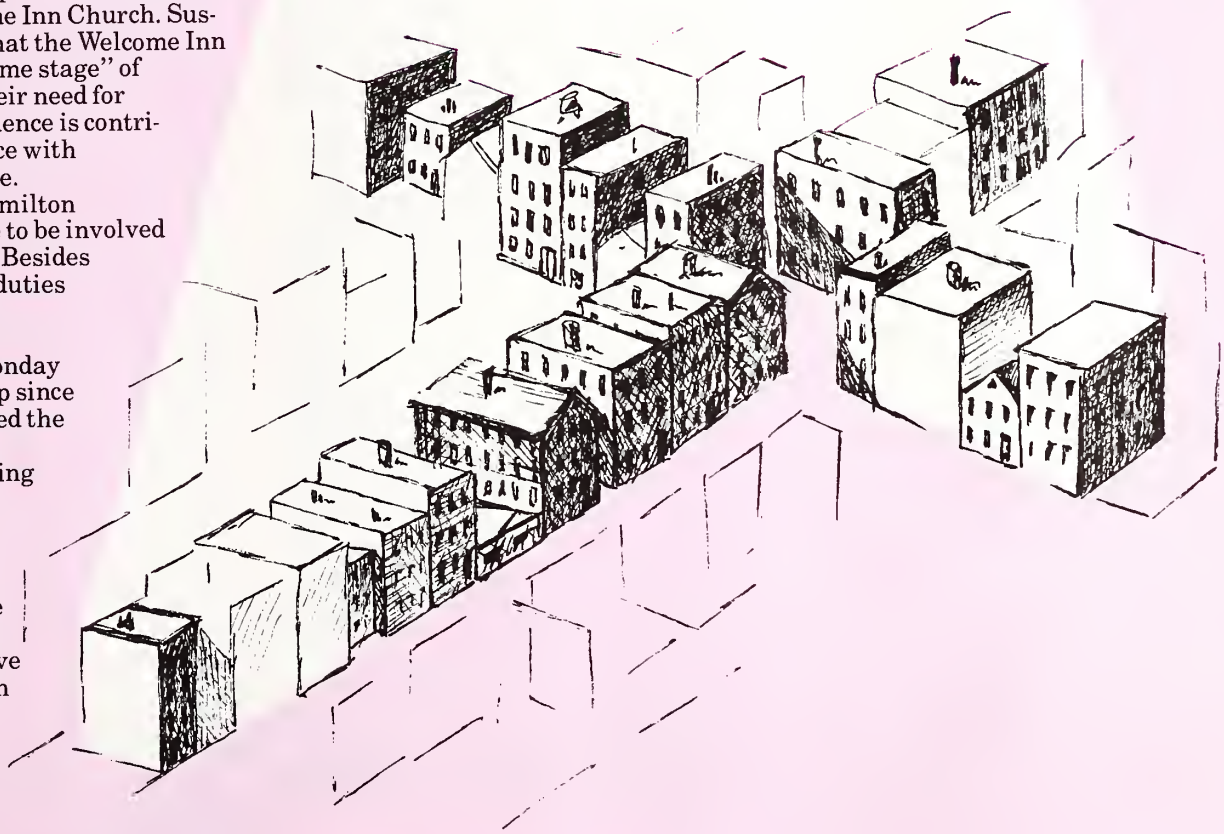
At the Welcome Inn Church and Community Center there is the opportunity for local people to develop organizational and leadership skills. By regaining a voice in their own community, people who have experienced poverty or limiting disabilities reclaim a sense of self-worth.

After five years as an MVS volunteer at the Welcome Inn, Kris Wagner shared some of her joys and struggles. She has been excited to be a part of the developing Welcome Inn Church and to see the gradual growth of local leadership. As a member of Hamilton Mennonite Church, she also expressed disappointment at the decreasing interaction between Hamilton Mennonite and North End people. "One failure of the Hamilton-Welcome Inn relationship has been the inability to bridge the gap between middle-class and North End people." One of Kris' hopes is that more people from Hamilton Mennonite may decide to move into the North End and share in the daily life of the neighborhood.

Susan Pries is a former volunteer who made the North End her home when her VS term finished in 1976. She is a member of Hamilton Mennonite, the chairperson of the VS support committee and active in the Welcome Inn Church. Susan's perspective is that the Welcome Inn is at the "leaving home stage" of development and their need for increasing independence is contributing to the distance with Hamilton Mennonite.

Members from Hamilton Mennonite continue to be involved at the Welcome Inn. Besides her administrative duties on the Welcome Inn board, Ruth Martin has attended the Monday night women's group since 1978. She has enjoyed the fellowship and said, "It's not them learning from us. I've experienced some real lessons in reconciliation at women's group—the kind of caring and willingness to forgive and forget that often doesn't happen in our church."

*The Welcome Inn began with the dreams of several people at Hamilton Mennonite Church. They felt God's call to share the Good News by reaching out to people with needs and to do it in their own community.*



*"The first day the Welcome Inn opened its doors, the church began to emerge."* Hugo Neufeld

*This is one of the phases along the way when volunteers gave a new "face" to the Welcome Inn.*

The Monday night quilting sessions began in the early days of the Welcome Inn when community women wanted to learn how to make quilts. For a long time the Welcome Inn staff and women from Hamilton Mennonite directed the quiltmaking process. Gradually North End women took more leadership until today they are the experts who teach newcomers the art of making patchwork quilts.

"It's a real community effort," commented Kris Wagner. The group grows every year, with up to 50 women participating, from young to old, and from single parents to women with physical or psychiatric disabilities. At Christmas each regular member of the group receives one of the quilts which she has had a hand in creating.

Every MVS volunteer has brought unique gifts and challenges to the Welcome Inn. As the late Herman Enns, a founder of the Welcome Inn, wrote in the 10th-anniversary yearbook, "At first we expected saints, but eventually we realized that MVS volunteers were people with similar needs and strengths as the rest of us, quite capable of stirring up trouble, but also willing to seek reconciliation, to enter into friendship with one another and to bring help and hope and happiness to their neighbors."

Until the move to new facilities this year, the MVS unit lived in the same building that housed both the Welcome Inn program and church. As community workers, their jobs are intense and all-absorbing, requiring a willingness to respond when needs arise and to run a busy, ongoing program.

Hugo Neufeld said, "MVS workers have been willing to enter every area of North Enders' lives—from celebrating a child's good marks to repairing a house."

The North End community has offered its own gifts of warm acceptance and tolerance to the many volunteers who have come and gone over the past 16 years. Relationships with community people have expanded the horizons of many.

Conversations with North End people show that VS people have a special place in their hearts.

Over a two-year VS term, friendships develop. Then come the inevitable goodbyes. When asked about her feelings toward MVS, Doreen Davies' first comment was, "I miss them so much when they leave."

The Welcome Inn is growing up. Those who have celebrated and struggled alongside it over the years have some advice for churches who are considering outreach work in their communities.

"Most important of all is that a church have a vision for its outreach work," said Kris Wagner. At the Welcome Inn, the deeply held conviction that God calls Christians to a lifestyle of loving servanthood has sustained their ministry and nurtured dreams for the future.

Betty Willms, a member at Hamilton Mennonite and coordinator of the Welcome Inn Program who has been involved for many years, said, "It's not been an easy way to do good. There have been many struggles. But in the end, reaching out strengthens a congregation."

"People have to be willing to give large blocks of time and energy. Change happens slowly, and you have to stick with it to make it happen," commented Ruth Martin. Her husband, Alvin, agreed. "You need lots of support to water, weed and trim your project."

To Hugo Neufeld, a hands-on approach is essential. "You must be willing to get involved alongside volunteers and to listen to their questions—idealism challenges and confronts."

After careful deliberations, there is still that moment when a church must decide to step out in faith. "Be willing to go ahead with a dream, and don't hold back," encouraged Hugo Neufeld.

As Herman Enns wrote, "Our hope is that the Welcome Inn can serve as a model for other urban churches. It has enriched and affected the lives of our members. It has become for us a window to the Third World at our doorstep."

Like the quilts that are stitched on Monday nights, the North End neighborhood is being drawn together by the work of many hands and hearts. There is a task for everyone as rich diversity is slowly sewn into a pattern of practical beauty. At the Welcome Inn, the Spirit is at work and the quilting of community goes on. •

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# a fresh ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

*Tig Intagliata*

When I first heard about Mennonite Voluntary Service, my main attraction was with the voluntary service rather than the Mennonite part of the title. I'd been told one can find all types in Los Angeles, but I had never before crossed paths with a Mennonite while roaming the Southern California freeways. I was completing my final year at university and my faith journey had reached a pivotal point. I sensed a call from God to make a lifestyle change which reflected a growing awareness within me that God had a special concern for the poor and oppressed in the world and that this concern was incarnated in the ministry and teachings of his son, Jesus. I felt Jesus challenging me to follow his example of identifying with the powerless and neglected in society, to share their hurts, needs and frustrations, and to serve them in whatever way I could.

My assignment in MVS was to teach at a small alternative secondary school which was run through a community social service agency in a predominantly Hispanic, inner-city neighborhood in Denver. I remember the initial culture shock I felt upon viewing the humble facilities and inadequate supply of teaching materials. But even more impressionable were the myriad backgrounds and experiences that the students brought with them. Many were from single-parent families living on welfare. Several had been in and out of public schools, police departments, group homes and a host of other impersonal institutions. The boys were conditioned at an early age to be macho in order to survive, while the girls were taught that having babies was the only useful contribution they could make to society. The struggles and despair born from a life of poverty were expressed in behavioral and motivational problems in the classroom, with the prevailing view that school was just another irrelevant institution imposed upon their lives.

I grew overwhelmed with my task within a short time. The daily expression of hurts, needs and anger of the students and community around me began to take its toll on me and started eating away at the initial joy and hope I'd brought into the situation. My expectations of quick, positive change in the behavior and attitudes of my students began to diminish. I found myself lacking the touch of the miracle worker that I'd set out to be. Each day seemed to be turning into a battle against a growing feeling of hopelessness and uselessness in my work.

The increasing sharing of the struggles and despair in the lives of those around me finally drove me to God in a broken state. I was driven to prayer, humbling myself before my Creator. Slowly, through prayer, reflection and meditation on the writings of Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen, a renewal of my relationship with God took place within me. I began to experience anew my total dependence upon him, and he alone was the true source of my being. This enabled me to bring my pains and inadequate feelings to him and empty myself in his presence, knowing that he was sharing them with me in my brokenness before him.

This cleansing process led me to the realization that God alone was in complete control of my life and the lives of those around me. I began to loosen my grip upon myself and on the situations I faced in life, freeing myself from the preoccupation with success and the need to have an influence on others in order to justify myself before God. I began to experience some of the powerlessness and vulnerability I'm sure many of the people in that inner-city neighborhood felt daily in their struggle for survival in a society where their voices are either ignored or not heard at all.

It was through my experience in MVS that I was vulnerably exposed to the lives of those who face the cold realities of living in poverty. And while sharing in their brokenness and despair, God granted me a slight view of what Jesus meant when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The poor in spirit—the powerless and the humble, those whose hope in life rests on the faith that God will respond to their cries for survival, security and sense of worth in society. I caught only a glimpse, but I saw enough to know that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. •

# I still hunger for peace

*Lorna Henkel*

"So instead of loving what you think is peace, love other people and love God above all. And instead of hating the people you think are warmongers, hate the appetites and the disorder in your own soul, which are the causes of war. If you love peace, then hate injustice, hate tyranny, hate greed—but hate these things in yourself, not in another" (Thomas Merton in *The Catholic Worker*, 1961).

The prospect of service in MVS was filled with expectations of living and working together with other volunteers, especially Mennonites who would be pacifists, adherents of a simple lifestyle and a wee bit radical in their approach to issues of war and justice. My own outward journey would be encouraged and strengthened as we worked together to minister to each other, our community and the world.

My hopes were not misplaced. There were plenty of opportunities to witness to the world around me. There was the hospitality we at Brown House offered to a long list of overnight guests who came in from the cold—victims of abuse, of personal disasters, of bureaucracies gone haywire. There was the opportunity to witness against injustice in El Salvador. There was the opportunity to speak to young men as they entered the post office to register with Selective Service. There was the opportunity to serve the poor and oppressed. As I became involved in the lives of several families, I experienced in part the frustration, despair and actual oppression with which they lived every day.

But living together turned out to be the greater challenge. It was in the kitchen, bathroom, living room and bedroom of our shared MVS housing that I learned the most about myself. There the grace of God often seemed absent. This was where I realized that all the injustice, tyranny and greed that I fought against out there was all too evident within me. My desire for community was challenged by the sharp corners and rough edges of others' tastes, values, personalities and lifestyles rubbing up against mine.

I came to MVS with my husband and two sons, then aged 12 and 9. As wife and mother, I had worked out ways of us living together and getting along that, if not entirely satisfactory, were at least familiar. And now my dream of living in community would be put to the test. Here I was living with people who were essentially strangers.

How quickly I learned this hard side of community—petty nagging problems that make life together a challenge. One wanted real milk all the time instead of the powdered milk we stretched our budget with; one insisted on using half of Lake Michigan when she washed the kitchen floor; Canadians wanted to celebrate Thanksgiving in October (well, that wasn't bad, eh?) and one wanted absolute quiet when she went to bed. There was the friction that exploded into open hostility on Easter Sunday.

In community I met myself in a new way. There were days when I wanted to run away from everyone in the house, including myself, days I had figured out just what to do to fix everything. But nothing changed quickly. Some of my sharp edges got sanded down and the rough places were smoothed. The grace of God was evident. As we sat around the table together, shared letters from home or from the prisoners one of us corresponded with and snatched a few minutes from our busy schedules for us, the disagreements and differences were often overcome. There was no magic or easy compromise. But we found ways to go on living together and ways to embrace each other *in spite of* until we could embrace *because of*. Like the pain of childbirth, so much of that pain is now forgotten as I celebrate some of the deep friendships that came out of my MVS years.

Speaking of childbirth and friendship, our third child, Sarah, was born at home in Brown House with family and friends. What a joyful experience that was, and we are now enjoying the charms of our active toddler. The depth of our love for one another in the church and community was again shown to me when a year later my father, whom a number of them had met and enjoyed, died.

I know better than ever how much I need people. Not just to be my friends, to like me and affirm me, but to show me more of myself—the places of darkness as well as light.

I am still hungry for peace, but more than before I recognize, as Thomas Merton expresses it, the appetites and disorder in my own soul. I recognize my continuing need for community to reveal and heal those appetites in me. And I see what A. J. Muste meant when he said, "There is no way to peace—peace is the way." Today I thank God for the part MVS played in my inward and outward journey. What I've learned continues to challenge me and beckons me to live in community again. Growing up into Christ Jesus isn't easy, but by God's grace it is possible and it is good. •

*MVS was an experience where I met myself in new ways. I learned a lot, but there is still much to grow for. Growing up into Christ is not easy, but by God's grace it is possible and it is good.*

# Two parables in a new version

*Peter J. Ediger*

**Luke 16:19-31**—There was a rich church which had plush carpets in its sanctuary, fine furnishings in its fellowship hall and which held frequent dinner parties. And at the church gates and down the street and around the country were poor folk named Lazy Russ and Welfare Mother and Unemployed and Refugee and Lesbian and Convict and Alcoholic and various other names, people full of hurts, who desired to be fed and befriended with what trickled down from the rich church's fellowship. Moreover, the alley cats came and comforted them.

The poor folks died and were carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom.

The rich church also died and was buried. And in Hades, being in torment, they lifted up their eyes and saw Abraham far off and the poor folks in his bosom.

And the rich church called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy upon us and send the poor folk to dip the ends of their fingers in water and cool our tongues, for we are in anguish in this flame."

But Abraham said, "Children, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things and the poor folk in like manner evil things, but now they are comforted here and you are in anguish.

"And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, a chasm you created on earth to keep the poor folk from touching you. And now those who would pass from here to you may not, and none may cross from there to us, as you wished it."

And the rich church said, "Then I beg you, Father Abraham, send some poor folk to our sister churches so that they may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment."

But Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets and Jesus and lots of preachers; let them hear them." And the rich church said, "No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." Abraham said, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets and Jesus and the preachers, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead."

**Luke 18:10-14**—Two people went to the church to pray, one a member of Mennonite Voluntary Service and the other a businesswoman. The Mennonite volunteer stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people, materialistic, affluent, conformist, or even like this business woman. I eat lentils twice a week, I even tithe my $35 monthly allowance."

But the businesswoman, standing far off, would not even lift up her eyes to heaven, but bowed her head, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

I tell you, this person went to her house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but she who humbles herself will be exalted.

*Peter J. Ediger, 5927 Miller Ave., Arvada, CO 80004, is the director of Mennonite Voluntary Service and co-pastor of the Arvada Mennonite Church.*

## Elegy to a revolutionary

*Kim France*

*We walked on*
*opposite sides*
*of the street*
*shadows with flame in our eyes*

*Craning, and peering late at night*
*never breaking stride*

*You, moving North*
*and I, South*
*both to bed and rest*

*You, a son of Jerusalem*
*and I, a child of the West*

*Lured by a ghost*
*on a poster*
*a Palestinian recruit*
*you followed the dust and flares*
*of war to the rubble*
*of Beirut*

*Betrayed by a face in a painting*
*in the glare of a gallery*
*I walk the same late street*
*to a classless society*

*I, a stepchild of Jerusalem*
*You, an orphan of the West*
*going in opposite directions*
*both to sleep and rest*

# Rockin' chair, go 'way from my view

*Gwen Norton*

A year in MVS and it's been my pleasure. Though age in our world is relative, the cliché "at my age" does come to mind. Everyone knows my chronological age, 75, but if you don't mind, it doesn't matter. I don't mind.

I spent a year in Wichita, Kan., as a Vista worker in a Meals on Wheels program. There I saw Mennonites at work for the poor. At Great Bend, Kan., where we were sent to process applications for aid after a flood, people told us how Mennonites came in and helped clean up their homes and make them livable. I also saw Mennonites at work in Marionville, Ill., after a tornado. I approve of all these actions. As Christians, it's what we should do.

In the summer of '82 I asked the Lord to send me someone to love. I really didn't ask for as many as I now have. Sometimes I think that was a big mistake. I should've prayed for someone to love me. I had asked the MVS office to not send me to St. Louis or Kansas City. Big cities don't appeal to me. Well, here I am in Chicago—for two years or more! And it seems like home.

When some said regarding my assignment, "To Chicago?!" my resolve faltered slightly. For the first few weeks here, time was lost looking over my shoulder to see if anything was gaining on me. There never was, and now North of Howard is home. People recognize me and friends are everywhere.

My beat is the North of Howard unit territory—a pocket of poverty (in Chicago) that borders Evanston on two sides and Lake Michigan on the east. The lake is one of God's natural cathedrals. Man has not been able to tinker with his tides or still the waves. Surcease from cares, it's there as we think of all the biblical stories of Jesus by the sea.

The focal point of my service assignment is the St. Elizabeth's House of Hospitality—a home for the homeless. Included are former street people who resist with every ounce of strength, mind and being ever returning to the streets. Some are the output of halfway houses for mental patients, some have been in prison. One man was shot by a robber while tending a parking lot. "For two measly bucks," he says. He is nearing 60 and is virtually penniless from paying for hospitalization and surgeries. Although he's spent much time in a wheelchair, his skills are now needed to make repairs around the place. Some are permanent guests, but usually they come and go.

The very poor have tastes like you and I. They like gourmet food, clothes by Dior, Levi's jeans, paintings in oil.

When you're poor, though, dreams are all you have. When you're at rock bottom, you'd better hold your head a little higher. And you better dream in color. Sometimes it helps to make believe that all's right in your world, though that world gives you only two meals a day, and measly ones at that. So you scrimp by buying cigarettes at the liquor store that sells them for 5 cents a pack cheaper, you test your old panhandling skills on the unsuspecting, and the time comes to some when the changed outlook promised by a bottle of booze makes it a necessity. When you're poor, you're always broke and you know it. But still you fight to pretend. At least you're alive and maybe there's hope.

It's impossible not to feel an affinity for these folks. But not long ago I felt my compassion was overtaxed. Twice in one day I had to tell an attractive young woman no. Her request was, "Can I go home with you and stay a few days until my check comes in?" The hurt of having to say no was too big for me to even cry about. That's big.

I often feel I do so little. But when a troubled young man of 32 comes up, puts his arms around me and says, "Thanks, Gwen, for caring," it's worthwhile.

These are my people that God has given me to love—as I asked.

Lately we've worked with food and menus. Americans really do throw away good food, from homes and from the markets. Acquiring food is not a problem now. What we need is more refrigeration. The discarded food from the markets, food from the Food Depository where merchants donate goods, government surplus shipments—it's a lot of work to use it all. Canned pork, beef, tuna, sweet potatoes, dried eggs, canned peaches, pears and applesauce are some of the surplus we use. The people who eat at the Hospitality House and the soup kitchen are hungry.

On Wednesdays I spend many hours baking for the soup kitchen. Sweet potato pie without crust, peach cobbler, applesauce cake squares and apple crisp. It is fun creating wholesome desserts for 150 people.

The name of the game here is caring. It doesn't seem like enough, but it's the least one can do. It gives an added dimension to any activity. From the love chapter in 1 Corinthians 13 we learn that "without love we are a clanging bell." Not pity, but *compassion*, pressed down and running over, is of the utmost importance.

My work is now my recreation too. As long as there are new people to know, new things to learn and see, I'm OK. My goal is to live another 25 years just to see what's around on this planet and what's up in the next century. Dec. 20, 1983, was my diamond anniversary—75 years old. My health is good. Who knows, I may make it to 100 and more.

Rockin' chair, go 'way from my view.

*Gwen Norton is at home with the North of Howard MVS unit at 7712 N. Paulina St., Chicago, IL 60626. Here she sits with a young girl from the community just after freshly braiding the youngster's hair.*

# Now *that's* good news!

*Lynn Keenan*

Evangelism is a high priority in the General Conference. We feel a growing urgency—a passion—to convey the Good News to an aching world. Where conflict is increasingly the way of life, where woman is pitted against man, North American against Central American, landowner against laborer, earth against caretaker, capitalist against communist, the Christian has precious good news to soothe the ache and cleanse the infection from festering wounds caused by sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, militarism and other divisions which keep us from being one people of God.

**What is evangelism?** Like the word "Christian," "evangelism" has been defined to mean many different things. Some forms of evangelism are violent, degrading and repelling. To bear witness to God's kingdom, our evangelism must convey unconditional love (inclusiveness in our churches), reconciliation (with God, with other people and with the earth), wholeness (the freedom and encouragement to develop and use all of our gifts, to celebrate all that each of us is) and service (that those who would call themselves Christ's might live and die to serve others rather than serve themselves). Now *that's* good news! When authentically good news goes out, people listen. Lives are changed. Systems are changed. Even the world order will change.

Roberta Hestenes, Presbyterian pastor and professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif., says, "Evangelism based on words but not backed up with authentic models of community and service is bankrupt evangelism. It is not enough to have orthodox words if the community is not there."

**MVS evangelism.** As an associate director for Mennonite Voluntary Service, I see this type of authentic evangelism in action and glorify God for it. I also feel the ongoing challenge to align my life and lifestyle with that model. Each of us could learn a lot from this "official" evangelistic arm of the Commission on Home Ministries, the only roadblock being our own endearment to the ways of the world.

Let's take a look at MVS units as models of evangelism backed up by community and service. In addition, I challenge you to ask yourself with me, "How does my own evangelism and lifestyle line up with this model of evangelism?" (As an ex-volunteer I am unsatisfied by the assumption that I've paid my dues and may now get on with a lifestyle befitting an educated, western professional. If Christ is Lord, Christ must be Lord throughout life, not simply for two sacrificial years.)

Households of volunteers sharing resources and striving to live simpler lifestyles put flesh on their orthodox words proclaiming love for neighbor in the name of Jesus Christ. They are living out their identity as world citizens committed to equal distribution of resources—a decreased consumption of resources that others may have more. Because Christ first loved, we now love with a love that involves sacrifice as well as celebration.

*And the watching world asks, "Why?"*

Households of volunteers—men, women, black, white, young and old, married and single—sharing equally in responsibilities, decisions and leadership put flesh on their orthodox words calling *all* people to submit to one another. They lend credibility and life-giving hope that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, male nor female, free nor slave.

*And the watching world asks, "Why?"*

Households of volunteers, striving to manage with integrity conflicts that emerge among themselves, put flesh on their orthodox words proclaiming the church to be the body of Christ on earth, divided not among its members but rather being generous, tenderhearted and forgiving of one another. One woman involved with an MVS unit for many years said after coming through several months of complex conflict and resolution, "Never before have I so genuinely experienced the church."

*And the watching world, seeing how they love one another, asks, "Why?"*

Households of volunteers providing a refuge for one another put flesh on their orthodox words proclaiming the church to be a place for the weary of heart and hand, a community of many gifts and talents, celebrating and utilizing those gifts for the enjoyment and service of others.

*Again the watching world asks, "Why?"*

Volunteers choosing to enter VS—leaving farms, businesses, universities, families and friends in return for hard, usually thankless work, simple accommodations and a small stipend—put flesh on Christ's mandate to serve "even the least of these." That one who might consider oneself great must first be humble.

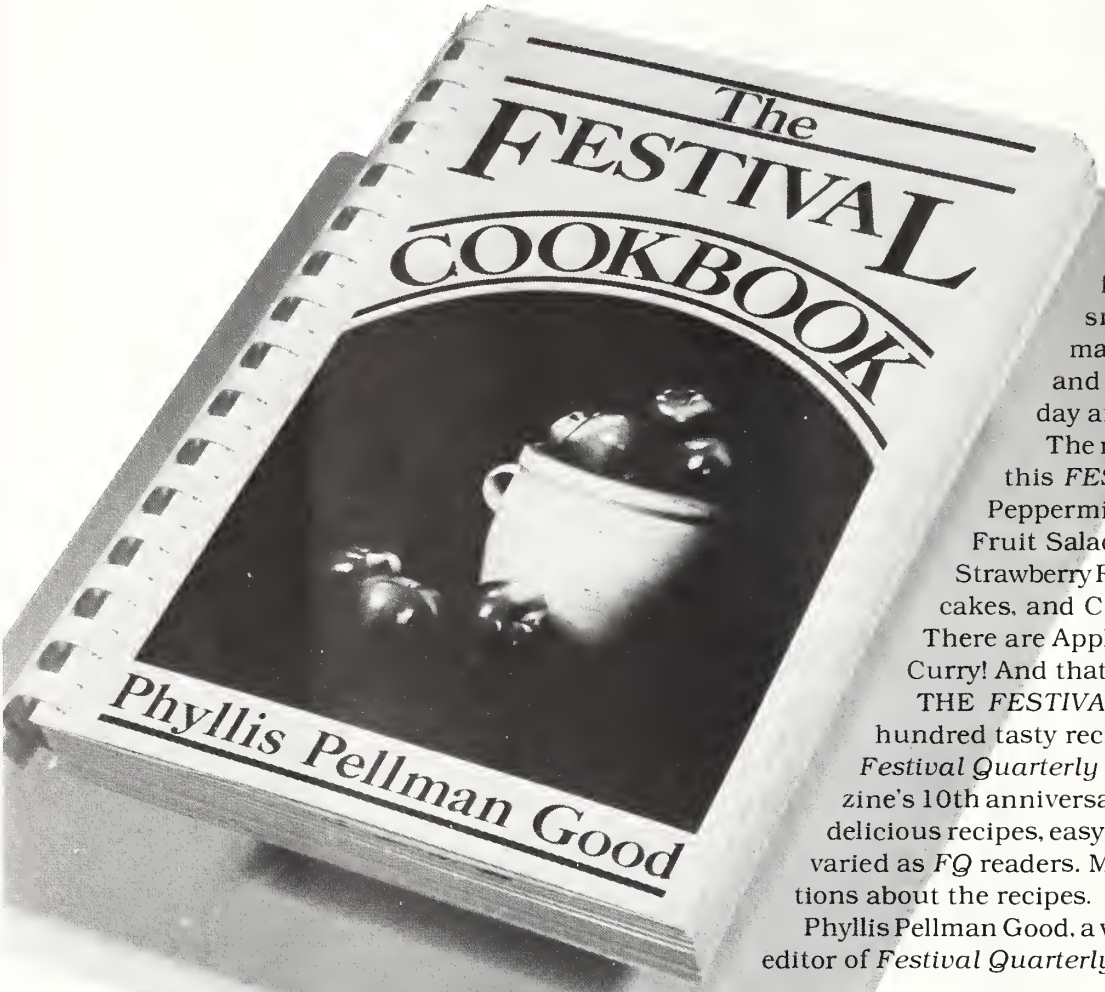
*In light of such absurdity, the watching world asks, "Why?"*

And when the world asks why, the church can proclaim the gospel without hesitation, knowing we are earnestly striving after a lifestyle indicative of the orthodoxy to which we hold.

There is room for such evangelism in GC lives and in people outside of GC structures. There is even a mandate for us all. Will each of us accept the challenge posed by MVS unit members?

*Lynn Keenan is the MVS associate director/west U.S., 5927 Miller Ave., Arvada, CO 80004.*

# THE FESTIVAL COOKBOOK




The rhythms of the Seasons define so much about our lives from the first tulip to the first snowflake. "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

The rich variety of the Seasons shaped this *FESTIVAL COOKBOOK*. How about Peppermint Peppernuts, Pumpkin Shell Fruit Salad and Asparagus Ham Bake? Or Strawberry Rhubarb Compote, Maryland Crabcakes, and Chicken and Noodle Green Salad. There are Apple Fritter Rings and African Beef Curry! And that's only the beginning . . .

THE *FESTIVAL COOKBOOK* contains several hundred tasty recipes submitted by the readers of *Festival Quarterly* magazine to celebrate the magazine's 10th anniversary. This cookbook runs over with delicious recipes, easy to understand and follow, and as varied as *FQ* readers. Many include stories and suggestions about the recipes.

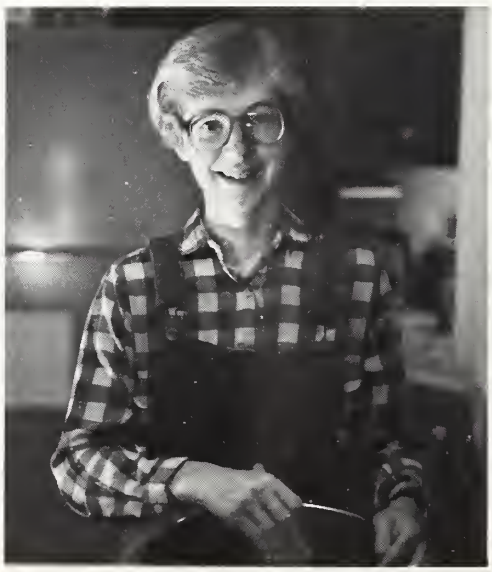
Phyllis Pellman Good, a writer and cookbook specialist, is editor of *Festival Quarterly* magazine.

**"What a wonderful surprise! To celebrate the 10th anniversary of our magazine *Festival Quarterly*, we invited readers to submit their favorite recipes for a four-seasons cookbook.**

**"We were flooded! To my own personal delight, there were many, many more recipes than we could use. So I selected from these many hundreds of recipes and shaped a four-seasons cookbook entitled *THE FESTIVAL COOKBOOK*.**

**"I hope you enjoy it as much as I already have!"**

**— Phyllis Pellman Good**



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# Farming and stewardship: What are the links?

Viborg, S.D.—A love for farming, a sense of Christian responsibility and the desire to learn more about that relationship was at the heart of a weekend seminar held at Swan Lake Christian Camp in rural Viborg, S.D., Nov. 11-13, 1983. A statement calling for increased awareness and action was written at its conclusion.

About 50 people attended the weekend seminar sponsored by the peace and social concerns committee of the Northern District Conference. Entitled "Stewardship: U.S. Agriculture and World Hunger," the sessions were led by Mark Epp, a farmer from Henderson, Neb., and Art and Jocele Meyer, a couple working with Mennonite Central Committee in development and related issues.

The seminar sought to help establish an awareness of the ways in which U.S. agricultural methods and policies have an impact on world hunger issues. By the end of the sessions, the group drafted a statement which reflected a concern that there is a link and that the same pressures and influences which perpetuate some of the causes of hunger are destabilizing the traditional family farm.

Epp cited such factors as loss of farmers, declining food quality, soil erosion and poor efficiency—the measure of productivity per unit of energy input—as indications that claims that U.S. agriculture is "the best in the world" are far from the truth.

He also detailed economic influences, marketing approaches and technological impacts, explaining how the American farmer has "bought into that system." Consumers are losing, farmers are being squeezed and our children's future is threatened, he said.

The Meyers explored a related aspect of the problem—the conditions in underdeveloped countries. Of the 4.7 billion people in the world, about 1 billion are in various degrees of hunger, they said. More than half a million are never satisfied. If we are seeing problems in the U.S., the problems are magnified in those countries, they said.

We need to keep a global perspective, the Meyers said. Resources are here for everyone. An approach to preservation of world resources—directly related to both problems in agriculture and world hunger—should include stabilization, protection, reforesting, reversing a "throw-away" society, conservation of resources and the development of renewable energy sources.

Participants asked to have continued emphasis called to the problems and alternatives. A steering committee was formed to explore the possibility of holding additional seminars, beginning a conference newsletter and starting local chapter groups. *Tim Waltner*

## Text of statement on stewardship and U.S. agriculture

*The following is the complete text of a statement adopted by participants at a conference on stewardship, agriculture and world hunger at Viborg, S.D., on Nov. 13, 1983. The conference was sponsored by the NDC's peace and social concerns committee.*

Today, in North America, the people of the land are abundantly blessed with rich natural resources which can lead to quality lifestyle. We desire to exercise freely the use of our minds, abilities and bodies as we work with the land, freely sharing its bounty, recognizing the land as a trust given by God to be cherished and passed on to future generations in all its fertility.

**We recognize that:**

1. Our modern agriculture system reflects current economic trends that are widening the gap between the "haves" and the "have nots."
2. Our present agricultural and food policy system is not sustainable in the long term.
3. We have a mandate to share the world's resources.
4. We recognize farming as a way of life that is satisfying, family and community oriented, and one which builds closeness to God.
5. Our present agricultural and food policy system contributes to the problem of world hunger and poverty. A smaller and smaller number of persons benefits from the system.
6. Our present agricultural and food policy system contributes to the instability of the family farm and competes with our responsibilities as stewards of God's creation.

**In light of the foregoing, we recommend that:**

1. Mennonite agriculturalists seek ways to support each other in pursuing a responsible style of farming. This should include:
   a. Forming local faith and farm groups that advocate responsible farming practices, supporting persons who may go against current non-sustainable trends and lead out in innovative ways.
   b. Publish and circulate a newsletter that provides a forum for sharing common concerns and support for alternative and more sustainable methods and practices.
2. Mennonite communities find innovative ways to share wealth produced from the buildup of agricultural estates.
   a. All should have wills so that land is passed to the next generation in most equitable ways.
   b. Farms should be made available to younger persons at reasonable prices.
   c. Local capital start-up should be available for loans to young/beginning farmers at low- or no-interest rates.
3. Consideration should be given to settling overseas refugees on land we own.
4. Careful thought and experimentation with alternative energy should be promoted.
5. Constant effort should be continued to sharpen one's moral and religious conscience in all aspects of farming, building and practicing faithful stewardship.
   a. This may mean living a more responsible lifestyle.
   b. This should include study of books like *The Mustard Seed Conspiracy* by Tom Sine.
6. We begin to grow more food crops and participate in direct marketing practices with consumers.
7. We continue and broaden support for MCC with people and money, and promote, whenever possible, organizations such as CROP.

**The annual March for Life,** this year marking the 11th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, drew a crowd estimated at 50,000 to Washington on Jan. 23. Before the demonstration, 30 anti-abortion leaders met with President Reagan and vowed to work for his re-election and against re-election of six senators they say favor abortion.

*Pro-life groups gather in Washington.*

**The Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador** and Central America has designated March 18-25 as Central America Week—a time of prayer, study and action in support of the people of Central America. The dates were chosen to commemorate the fourth anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador. Since Romero's death another 40,000 Salvadorans and thousands of other Central Americans have died in the violence in Central America. Another 2 million are displaced. A resource packet for churches and small groups is available for $3 from Task Force, Room 633, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

## *Markham church welcomes more Salvadorans to 'sanctuary'*

Chicago (GCMC)—Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Ill., has accepted more Salvadorans into "sanctuary" with their congregation. A public service welcoming a refugee family to the church was held on Jan. 29.

Jose Lopez, a union leader in El Salvador, was forced to flee his country with his wife, Maria, and four teenage children—Roberto, Ana Maria, Elena and Cecilia—because of persecution by the government of El Salvador.

The Markham Mennonites recognize that sheltering the family violates U.S. policy, since Salvadorans are not officially recognized as refugees. But church officials explain that they feel "called to minister to our Central American brothers and sisters" both as a humanitarian gesture and as a challenge to the U.S. government policy of deporting Salvadorans and Guatemalans back to their war-torn homelands. They also strongly oppose any U.S. aid to governments which "consistently violate human rights."

The Jan. 29 service marked the second time in the past year that the Markham church has given "public sanctuary" to Central American refugees. In June 1983, it gave refuge to Mauricio Acosta Garcia, a young student who fled El Salvador when his name appeared on a government death list.

Paul Weaver, staff person for the Markham refugee program, explained that "loving our neighbor includes giving shelter to the homeless. We have been doing that locally for several years through Hope Community Services, and now we are being called to help those who are here in exile from their homelands.

"We feel a special responsibility to these people because their suffering is a direct result of the foreign policy of our government. In the past four years we have given over a billion dollars of aid to prop up the authoritarian government of El Salvador. That government is responsible for the repression which has produced more than 40,000 deaths and over 1 million refugees, out of a total population of 5 million."

Weaver said that the church intends to continue aiding Central American refugees, in violation of U.S. immigration policy, until Salvadorans and Guatemalans in the United States are granted permission to remain here temporarily (as Poles and Cubans are), or until the repression in their home countries ends and they can return home.

The Markham church is also holding a series of weekly, outdoor, public vigils in various southern suburbs of Chicago to draw attention to the needs of such refugees and the injustice of U.S. policy in these cases.

## Oregon church votes to withdraw from General Conference

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Salem, Ore., have voted 109-5 in favor of withdrawing from membership in the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Pacific District Conference. The decision was made at a congregational meeting on Jan. 24.

In a telephone interview on Jan. 31, Emmanuel pastor Dwain Holsapple said the move came after many years of struggles about the church's relationship to the larger bodies. "For a long time now we have not been fully committed to the General Conference," he said. "Our main problems have been with the conference's theological liberalism and tolerance of things that, in our view, are unscriptural and ungodly."

Holsapple said that Bethlehem '83, the churchwide gathering held in Pennsylvania last August, focused his congregation's dissatisfaction with its conference affiliation.

"The failure of the General Conference to take clear, scriptural positions on issues like homosexuality brought things to a head," he explained. "There is not the concern in conference leadership levels that there should be about ungodliness. The conference has for years been weak in its interpretation of Scripture."

The Salem church pastor said that the question of withdrawal from the conference emerged at the church's annual meeting on Jan. 10, when a motion was made to pull out of both the General Conference and the Pacific District Conference. Because the action represented a change in the congregation's constitution, a two-week notice was given for another meeting to decide the matter.

Yet according to Vern Preheim, general secretary of the General Conference, the vote by Emmanuel to withdraw without first dialoguing with conference leadership violates the GCMC constitution. It stipulates that "when a congregation is giving consideration to withdrawal action, no final decision will be taken prior to discussions with an official representative from the conference who will share the concerns of the conference." According to Article II, Section II, D. 5, such dialogue before withdrawal action must take place "in recognition of our bonds in Christ" and as evidence of a "readiness to share concerns."

Preheim has written to Holsapple requesting a meeting with his congregation in mid-March.

# THE MENNONITE

## WM EDITION

# window TO MISSION

APRIL-MAY 1984

# THE OPEN WINDOW

I WOULD LIKE TO COME to the defense of the "Mennonite Game," the one that starts by examining the name of the new acquaintance. "Yoder? Yes, and what was your father's first name? Where are you from? Was your mother a Miller?" After a lengthy, probing inquisition, you are triumphant when you can claim second cousinship once removed.

The game is sometimes deplored—one might even think that there are immoral aspects to it. "Oh, the 'Mennonite Game' again," someone will say disparagingly.

But have you ever listened to non-Mennonites play their game? I overheard this conversation at a picnic when two strangers met: "Where are you from? Oh, I know someone from California, in L.A. No? You once lived in Denver—why so did I! What was your address? That is only two blocks from where we lived. Well, that was earlier than we were there, but did you know the Longermans? You went to school with their youngest daughter. She is? Really, I didn't know that."

At a recent gathering I approached an Indian woman and introduced myself. Having lived in India for four years, I thought we could find something in common. And we did—eventually. Much of the excitement in life comes from meeting new people, getting new information, opening one's mind to new views.

The "Mennonite Game" gives Mennonites some shortcuts for getting to know one another. I enjoy playing it. I recognize that an unfortunate aspect of the game is that if played in a group it excludes those outside the culture, those who don't know enough Mennonites to play the game. So it should not be played as a group game. But on a one-to-one basis, played properly, it can be a delightful way to get past intense discussions of the weather and recipe exchanges and on to worthwhile friendships.

—Ruth Unrau

**COVER**

Elizabeth and Helen Siebert, two of our Christian sisters in the Soviet Union. See article on page 3 to learn more about them.

WM

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# Making Friends
## —a Visit to the Soviet Union

Gayle Wiebe

OUR GROUP was remarkably quiet and subdued as we got closer to Moscow. I had never traveled abroad before and was looking forward to the experience. The quietness of the group puzzled me.

It was not until our three weeks had passed and we left the Soviet Union that I discovered the courage it had required for many of our twenty-eight-member group to go on this tour.

Our tour was designed for Mennonites from Canada and the United States to see where the Mennonites had originally settled in Russia and to visit cities where Soviet Mennonites now live. Many of our group were returning to the Soviet Union. Almost all had relatives that they intended to visit. Thus for many this trip was an event that they had looked forward to and dreaded for years.

Tour members told story after story about their experiences in Russia, of their relatives, and of their need to return to this country. As I listened, I was enthralled by the courage these people displayed as well as the fears that they readily admitted.

Not being born in Russia, nor having relatives there, the tour had a slightly different significance for me. I was curious about the Mennonites who had remained in Russia and also eager to see many of the places about which I had heard from those who had fled from Russia.

Karaganda, the city where many Mennonites were forced to settle during the war, is a mining city and not a place where tourists usually visit. For us it was one of our most important stops because many of our group had relatives in or near Karaganda to visit during our three-day stay.

As our bus pulled up outside the hotel we saw that the front lawn and driveway were swarming with people. They were all there to greet our group. There were tears in my eyes as I watched the many reunions take place.

In less than an hour everyone in our

*We were greeted warmly by the Siebert family and friends who had gathered to visit with us.*

group had invitations to homes of the Mennonite people of Karaganda. We who were without relatives were "adopted" by families and spent many enjoyable hours with them.

My stay in Karaganda was the highlight of my trip because I met two young women whom I will not soon forget. My father (the tour leader), Stella Doerksen, and I were invited to the Siebert household. I was excited, but also frustrated because I could not speak Russian or German and so would miss out on a great deal of the conversation. Stella and my father quickly reassured me and offered to act as my interpreters.

All nine children in the Siebert family lived at home except for the eldest daughter who lived with her husband and in-laws. Most of the family were home during our visit.

I was quickly approached by the two middle Sieberts who were thrilled that a young person from Canada had come to visit. Rarely had someone close to their age visited from another country and they were filled with questions. With many hand gestures and help from my interpreters we learned much about each other.

Elizabeth is twenty-two and in nurses training. She talked with enthusiasm about when she would finish her training.

Helen, the more outspoken of the two, is nineteen and had just finished high school. She is in training to be a seamstress.

They showed me their home which was not large. I wondered where they found room for everyone to sleep. I discovered that many rooms had dual purposes. At night the living and dining rooms became bedrooms. Even the small hayloft in the shed was used as a bedroom. By Canadian standards the accommodations were cramped, but by Russian standards the Siebert home was a large one.

The young women were proud of their family and each family member was strongly committed to one another. Elizabeth, the eldest unmarried daughter at home, takes seriously the responsibilities this entails, including helping with the upbringing of her two nephews who live in their home as well as her younger brother.

Music is an important part of Helen and Elizabeth's lives. They were proud of their family piano and explained that many people could not afford one or were unable to get one. They were very privileged to have one.

Helen was learning to play on her own. She eagerly brought out her music books and asked about some things she had been unable to understand on her own.

The Sieberts often spend time singing around the piano. One of the brothers brought out his balalaika, which is much like a mandolin, and they made music together. Although I could not understand the words they sang, the sound was beautiful. I was impressed with their natural talents. None had taken any formal music lessons.

Church is also an integral part of Helen and Elizabeth's lives. Both are members of one of the Mennonite church choirs. This experience is very important to them.

They are also active in the church's young people's group. Although the government forbids it, the group meets weekly for Bible study and numerous social events.

I heard Helen and Elizabeth's parents tell some horror stories of hardship, struggles, and courage. Their mother remembered being taken from her home and sent on a train with others to settle in Karaganda. First, however, the people on the train had to build the railroad tracks to Karaganda.

The members of this older generation remember how life used to be in the Soviet Union and chafe against the many restrictions they now have. They

*Singing in the church choir is an important part of Helen and Elizabeth's lives.*

are concerned that the young people not forget the injustices inflicted upon the Mennonites in the Soviet Union.

Young people like Helen and Elizabeth have known no other way of life and seem to accept the government restrictions. Where these restrictions get in the way of their faith they quietly work around the rules and continue to study, worship, and praise as they feel God calls them to do.

The faith of people like Helen and Elizabeth is a strong one. It must be to survive. The fears that the older generation experience, however, do not seem to be present in these young people.

As Helen and Elizabeth talked about their church and their faith, they talked with optimism. They are not unaware of the potential dangers that their faith brings with it. They certainly do not take the privilege of worshiping God for granted.

They commented on how incredibly blessed the young people of Canada and the United States are because they are able to express their faith freely. Yet they also spoke of how richly blessed they are to have heard God's Word, to have Christian friends, and to experience God's presence in their lives.

As I got to know Helen and Elizabeth, the differences in our lifestyles seemed to fade away. The differences between our countries did not prove to be much of a barrier between us.

Helen and Elizabeth are two young women with numerous interests and talents who are committed to a Christian way of life. I was impressed with the strength of this commitment and with their open sincerity and warmth. Through their eyes I was able to see my own situation in a new light. I was reminded of how blessed I am.

I did not learn to speak German while visiting Helen and Elizabeth in Karaganda, but they did teach me the meaning of two words. As we said good-bye we hugged each other and exclaimed, "*meine Freunde*."

I thank God for "my friends" in the Soviet Union who taught me so much about what it is to have faith.

# THE CO CONNECTION

**Claire de Brun**

*Claire and Harlan, American Baptists from Maine, attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries during 1982-83, and were commissioned for missionary service by the Silver Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. Claire has taught high school history and English and has been a ski coach.*

MISSIONARIES ARE always looking for better methods of orientation to their overseas assignment. We, in consultation with our home board (Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) and the field staff in Lesotho, decided to try the "bonding" method. We would be placed in a village for two weeks before taking up residence in the capital city.

Our "L"-shaped house was made of concrete—cement floors, and a tin roof. The simple furnishings included a small gas refrigerator and stove, and a coal stove for heat. There was an outhouse "out back" and a big galvanized tub for personal washing.

We were part of an extended family, living in the midst of a clan. Our houses were close together and we were surrounded by the comings and goings of the people. This enabled us to "get a jump" on the language, make friends, and observe the winter lifestyle of the Basotho villagers. The children were delightful and friendly.

Often our children would do their own visiting as they roamed the village. I would find them down by the river helping with the washing, herding cows into the kraal at sunset, or standing by a large, black, three-legged pot stirring the hot steamy contents over an open fire.

We attended church in a small house made of concrete and tin with the traditional thatched roof. The formal services had lots of singing and spontaneous preaching.

During the week we met informally with our new friends. The people were very friendly and invitations to their homes were frequent as was their willingness to drop by our home.

We were able to share not only our homes, but our hearts as well, as we talked about Jesus Christ. After talking with one man we invited him home for supper. At that time he asked us to pray with him about his disabling drinking problem. He was in church the next day listening to his fellow people sing and talk about Jesus.

In this setting we were also exposed to the disturbing and unjust effects of the migrant labor system, drought, disease, and dehumanizing poverty. The problems loom large and can produce numbing guilt and paralysis of action.

To cope with that feeling, we try to take one day at a time, believing that serving where need and opportunity arise *is* a response to the conditions here. This service is not just the Bible teaching program, but it is establishing relationships, listening, learning, caring, sharing, and serving in small ways.

Our prayer is that we might know how to live out our answer in response to the needs of the Basotho with whom we relate and to the call and teachings of Jesus Christ when asked, "Why have you come?"

# PROGRAM 5 OUR UMSIEDLER SISTERS

Cornelia Lehn

A literal translation of the word *Umsiedler* is re-settler. Another word frequently used is *Heimkehrer* or home-comers.

Who are these resettlers or homecomers? Why are they being resettled, and if they are homecomers, where have they been and where was their home? Why are we as Women in Mission interested in them?

When I arrived in the refugee camp in Gronau, Germany, as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) worker in 1950, I soon found out that there were few Mennonite families in the camp that were intact. The missing members of the families were said to have been "dragged back to Russia." The expression "dragged" says it all.

They had come from Russia (where they had lived for many generations) with the retreating German army during World War II. They became German citizens. When Germany was defeated, the occupying Russian army forcibly returned many of its former citizens to Russia. The Mennonites knew they were not returning to their former homes, but instead were being sent to slave labor, torture, and death.

Family members in Germany who escaped this fate were helped by MCC to emigrate to Canada and South America. A few came to the United States. Those who had been forced to return to Russia were not heard from for many years.

God works in marvelous and incomprehensible ways. After some thirty years the German government reached an agreement with the Russian government allowing German citizens now in Russia to "come home" to Germany. Our Mennonite people were among them.

For the last ten years Mennonite people have been coming out of Russia and settling in Germany. There has been much visiting back and forth between Germany and Canada and South America. There have been incredible reunions between broken families since then. Husbands and wives were reunited. Children, now grown up, saw

their fathers for the first time. Sisters and brothers, who knew each other as children, now met as adults. Friends and neighbors who had lost one another were suddenly able to sit down together again and share their experiences.

The German government has helped its "*Heimkehrer*" or "*Umsiedler*" very generously. They gave enough financial aid so people could get settled, and also helped them get jobs. But there is a different kind of help that is needed.

These Mennonites came out of persecution and oppression. They have desperately clung to their faith. Their only hope was in the life to come. Their only joy was to come together in prayer. Now they are suddenly faced with a new set of possibilities and a totally different culture. Many of the older people shrink back in terror from all the "worldliness" surrounding them in a supposedly Christian country.

**The Mennonites knew they were not returning to their former homes, but instead were being sent to slave labor, torture, and death.**

The new emerging congregations need help. Their leaders have no theological training that provides direction for coping with this new set of problems.

A Committee of Mennonite Congregations for the spiritual nurture of the *Umsiedler* has been formed. In response to their requests, the Canadian Conference has been sending ministers and Christian educators to work along with the *Umsiedler* in their congregational programs.

In the spring of 1983 the *Umsiedler* congregations asked Helmut Harder of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and me to come to talk about Christian education in their churches and to show them the Foundation Series Sunday school curriculum. This has been translated into German already for use in South America.

So I met some of the people who had been missing when we had helped the more fortunate members of their families to emigrate to Canada and South America back in 1950.

After our initial tour through the congregations, I remained in Germany to travel from church to church conducting Sunday school teacher training workshops. During this time I stayed in *Umsiedler* homes and would like to tell you about some of the women I learned to know and love.

### STORY NO. 1

She came to meet me with outstretched-hands—this tiny, gray-haired little woman—and looked at me with stars in her eyes. Then she bustled about her apartment to make me comfortable.

After having tea, she made up a couch in the living room on which I was to sleep. Suddenly she sat down again and asked, "Could we have evening devotions together? Would you read the Scriptures?" She showed me where she was in her reading and which portion to read. Then we prayed together.

Somehow that opened her heart. "When we were sent back to Russia in the boxcars, . . . " she began. With that the floodgates of memory were opened, and she told me about her experiences.

She had been forty years old at that time. She, along with many other women, had been sent to Siberia to cut down trees. They lived in barracks.

Early in the morning, sometimes with the temperature at thirty degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and without any breakfast, they went into the forest to work. They worked in pairs. Her partner was a young, rebellious girl, who said, "I'm only going to cut enough wood to build us a fire so we can warm up."

Retribution came quickly. They were both sent to prison. "Four years in prison, with even less to eat," she said, her eyes looking far, far back into the agony of that time. "And then back into the forest."

We sat together until far into the night.

**STORY NO. 2**

I was ushered into a large, beautiful house and had a delightful visit with a charming middle-aged couple. She was a medical doctor and he worked in a factory. They had come from Russia about ten years ago with their two children. Another child was born in Germany. His mother was living with them.

The next morning when I got up, the place was deserted. Everybody had gone to school or work. Only "*Oma*" was there. Blessed is the home that has an *Oma* such as this one. She served me breakfast and sat down to have a cup of coffee with me. What followed was naturally her life's story.

Her husband had been taken away during the Stalin era and she had never heard from him again. After her son was grown up, she had come to live with him and his wife to take care of the house and the children. Her daughter-in-law had decided to study medicine.

Ever since that time she had managed the household. She had brought up the children, for the parents were always at work. Finally she had come to Germany with them.

Even after all these years she was still able to manage. Oh, her back was troubling her more and more, especially after she had done the washing, but it was still possible. And she was glad that she was still needed.

Yes, indeed, she was still needed and appreciated. The parents were very active in church. I had stimulating conversations with them and enjoyed their fellowship. But it was *Oma* who held me to her heart when I said good-bye.

**STORY NO. 3**

It puzzled me a bit as to why my hostess seemed a bit detached. She was friendly and graciously showed me to my room. (By the dolls and books, I realized I was being given her little daughter's room.)

Shortly afterwards she came back to bring me some "*Saft*" or juice since in Germany you don't drink water from the tap. But in spite of her gentle smile, her eyes were dull.

During the week that I was with this family, she and I had many conversations but they never went very deep. We always remained at the surface of things—until finally toward the end of my stay when she pressed her hands to her temples and I asked her whether she had a headache, she said softly, "Oh, yes! I almost always do. Constantly. But it is no wonder. It is because of all the things we have experienced."

And then she finally told me about her childhood, about her youth. It poured out of her—the agony, the heartache, the fear. It seemed that their efforts to leave Russia in the immediate past had been especially traumatic for her. She relived it all again.

**They are suddenly faced with a new set of possibilities and a totally different culture. Many of the older people shrink back in terror from all the "worldiness" surrounding them in a supposedly Christian country.**

"We had to fill out so many papers, and our friends told us to be sure not to list our brothers and sisters who were staying behind in Russia or else we would never receive permission to leave. So we didn't. It was a lie. It bothered me terribly.

"One day when my husband was not at home, I looked out of the window

and saw a police car pull up in front of our door. I was sure that they had found out about the deception and had come to get us. I was terrified.

"It turned out to be a routine check on the part of the police and we did get our papers to come to Germany, but it still bothers me."

"The lie?"

"Yes, that we did not say the complete truth, and if you are a Christian you should speak the truth."

She covered her face with her hands and moaned.

* * *

These are our *Umsiedler* sisters. I have shared about only three, but they are symbolic of thousands of others.

How can we enter into their suffering? How can we rejoice with them? How can we understand? How can we be of help to one another?

## PROGRAM "HOW-TO" IDEAS

1. First of all ask your group to share what they know about "*Umsiedler*." This may differ widely. In Canada many women have *Umsiedler* relatives and can share stories about them. In the United States some may not even know what the word means.

Share some of the background and history of the *Umsiedler* with the group from the preceding program materials. Use a map of Europe to trace their travels from Russia through Poland to Germany, back to Siberia, and finally back to Germany.

2. Ask three different women each to read the story of one of the *Umsiedler* women from the program material.

3. The *Umsielder* enjoyed singing. They sang the gospel songs which they had sung together during the severe persecution and also afterwards.

These songs are still their comfort and hope. Many of the songs expressed their gratitude for salvation and their longing for heaven. They were all in German.

If your group knows the German language, sing such songs as "Es ist ein Born, draus heilges Blut fuer arme Suender quillt" (No. 176, *Gesangbuch der Mennoniten*) or "Wie wird uns sein, wenn endlich nach dem schweren, Doch nach dem letzten ausgekaempften Streit" (No. 525, *Gesangbuch der Mennoniten*).

If the group would rather sing in English, such songs as "Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine" (No. 544, *The Mennonite Hymnal*) could be substituted.

Actually the *Umsiedler* sang out of a very old little hymnbook called *Der Drei-Bund*. If someone in your group has a copy of this book, you may select your songs from it.

4. The *Umsiedler* cherished the Scriptures above all else. They knew what it was like to be without the Bible. Many had copied passages which they read and reread.

Ask each participant to choose the passage she would copy if she had no Bible and then ask each to read one verse of that passage.

5. Have prayer fellowship like the *Umsiedler* have and pray for those in the world who are suffering under oppression and who are living in constant fear.

6. Contribute financially to the program of sending workers to help the *Umsiedler* congregations.

7. For your devotional time, use the material suggested for Program 5 in the 1983-84 Devotional/Resource Packet available from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for $2.

# slice of life

**Jeannie Zehr**

"I grew up in an American Baptist church in Lima, Ohio," I smilingly stated to the gentleman seated to my right. I knew he was an American Baptist clergyman and so thought this statement might provide grist for further conversation.

His "Oh, really?" response was followed by no further comment. Our conversation drifted to another topic.

Later when I was alone I reflected on one or two other occasions when I had met American Baptist clergy and had made a similar comment with little response.

No, "Oh, was that before the move to the suburbs?" or "Was Howard Bloom your pastor?" Not a soul asked, "Then do you by any chance know Russ Chiles? He's my cousin."

In the chill of my reflecting moments I suddenly realized that the lack of interest and response wasn't the fault of the American Baptist clergy to whom I spoke! It just wasn't the "Mennonite Game" in which I so often participate.

Our denomination is small enough that many know one another or one another's relatives. It's a "one-big family" warmness that comes with the game. Sometimes the game can be exclusive, but right now, as one who didn't grow up playing the game, I'm enjoying the warmth and togetherness it provides.

**Gladys Goering**

WE WERE SEATED around the table in the conference room. Representatives of the Women's Missionary Association (WMA) soon to become Women in Mission (WM) and a Commission on Education publishing committee had met to talk about a proposed women's paper.

In September 1973 the final issue of *Missions Today* appeared. It had been a difficult decision to bring to an end forty-seven years of mission information, but a shrinking readership and rising subsidy had to be faced.

When WMA began publishing a small four-page leaflet in December 1926 called *Missionary News and Notes*, the women became mission educators in a real sense. Most mission groups received only one copy of the monthly letter which was read aloud to the society. When the request for separate copies for each woman resulted in a bigger subscription list, some protested that something would be lost if they couldn't learn together.

For a few years *News and Notes* was printed in both English and German, but as German became less prevalent it was discontinued. There was nothing to indicate the *News and Notes* was for women only, but it found few readers outside the women's organization. In 1965 *Missionary News and Notes* became *Missions Today*, but promotional efforts added few new subscribers.

In the early 1970s the Commission on Overseas Mission decided to discontinue mission field papers in favor of one to be called *Encompass*. With that loss of primary source material, WMA had little option but to discontinue their mission paper.

Did we still need our own paper with a different format? That was what a special committee set out to learn. This was the period in General Conference history when the first undercurrent of increasing women's involvement was being felt. At stake also was the question whether WMA and similar organizations were still needed. The WMA coordinator reported to the Council of Commissions in February 1974 that in response to a questionnaire one woman had voiced the opinion of many: "Because of the women's fellowship, many women who otherwise could have little opportunity to share their gifts of leadership or various other talents are able to do so." Equally strong was support for their own publication.

With this background, we were now meeting with COE personnel to promote a paper for which they were less than enthusiastic. "What do you want that you don't get in *The Mennonite*?" they asked.

"We feel a need for something more personalized, something less formal."

"Couldn't you get the same results with articles regularly submitted to *The Mennonite*?"

"No. It isn't just news items we are looking for, but something which will provide a bond of mutual interests."

"Are you planning to have recipes and household hints?"

"Goodness no. We have no desire to compete with commercially available magazines."

When we said we were planning something with eye appeal, something with a bit of color, we were told *The Mennonite* had received many compliments from journalists about its clean white look. We were also "kicking against the pricks" in wanting a small periodical that could be easily carried and kept but was to be a part of *The Mennonite*. That it would be a problem at the press had not occurred to us, nor had we thought through many decisions which would still have to be made.

In the end, WM would publish their own paper, but the meeting served as a goad in sharpening direction and goal.

To Muriel Thiessen Stackley, *Window to Mission*'s first editor, goes much of the credit for the form the small periodical assumed. At the February 1974 meeting of the WM council, Muriel declared: "Consider this a birth announcement. Our baby has been born. It promises to be a healthy child. It has an excellent heritage. Its name is *Window to Mission*."

In April 1974 the first issue appeared as an insert in *The Mennonite*. International in theme and personal in emphasis, it was a welcome and attractive addition to nearly half a century of WMA publications.

On its first birthday, *Window* observed the seventy-fifth year of India missions with a play written by Naomi Lehman. It also promoted the United Nations International Women's year.

Jeannie Zehr became editor during the second year, and the first "Slice of Life" made its appearance.

In the third year the difficult times of living through grief and divorce were faced.

Year number four stressed global oneness in Christ, including studies of Canadian and U.S. Indians.

During world conference year there were articles and pictures of the Taiwan choir whose members were being hosted in Mennonite homes.

Life at home and away from home was thought about in the sixth year in studies of women in church vocations, abortion, and a loving tribute to a mother-in-law.

Year number seven gave some straight talk on stewardship in action, and the following year called for healthy self-love.

A trip to Asia by two WM leaders was reported in the ninth year. Another gesture for international peace was described as women in Ontario pieced a quilt to be sent to Russian women, a special feature in the past year.

Even a casual survey reveals the wide range of concerns and interests addressed. Ties with Women in Mission organizations are unobtrusive but solid, as lessons and articles include a broader scope.

For many readers, the use of both familiar and unfamiliar church persons as writers and artists, and the individual sharing of experiences which characterize *Window* are a unique and appreciated witness.

*Window to Mission* is now ten years old. It carries the imprint of its second editor as it continues its accent on person and community. Perhaps, as at its birth, this would be a good time to assess its worth. Has it fulfilled the goals for which it came into being? Is its task completed? Rising publication costs and subsidies compel us to ask as we did at its origin about its worth to us. What is your opinion?

Happy birthday, *Window to Mission*!

# WM office jottings from Joan

A memory from almost forty years ago surfaced in my mind today. I saw and heard myself singing the Hindi words of a Western Christian song which was taught to me and others at "junior church" by a dynamic young missionary woman. That woman was Mennonite missionary, Christena (Mrs. J. R.) Duerksen and this February afternoon we celebrated her life in a quiet, beautiful memorial service at the Bethel College Mennonite Church.

Draped today in a white and gold sari, given to her many years ago by the then Queen of Korba, her life spoke of both inner and outer beauty. I was awed again by the example of one dedicated so wholly to sharing the good news of Jesus. She taught men, women, and children as she traveled through the countryside. She loved God, people, and nature, and her poems and the book of mission stories she wrote reflect that. She never owned a home but was very rich indeed—in faith, friendships and experiences.

* * * * *

Prayer concerns can be more focused by using the new overseas mission prayer request list; it is updated monthly and available from the COM office. Also, if WM groups want information regarding itineraries of COM missionaries on North America Assignment, contact the secretary for Mission Communications, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

* * * * *

The Pastors' Wives' Personal Growth Fund included in the WM budget each year, assists a number of women financially as they participate in the January interterm session at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries while their spouses also study there. An excerpt from a letter from one of the grateful participants states: "I want to say how thankful I am that Women in Mission helps financially. . . . Having been on the receiving end, the giving end will also be much more important to me from now on." Pastors' spouses interested in more information about this program should write to the Ministerial Leadership office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for more information.

* * * * *

The seventh Women in Ministry conference will be held May 4-6, 1984, at Harrisonburg, Virginia. Over twenty workshops are planned and the general sessions will feature a keynote speaker. The cost of registration and meals for the full conference is $35 U.S. funds before April 15, and $40 U.S. funds after that date. Request a brochure and registration form from: Women in Ministry, Box 1251, Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 11801.

* * * * *

The unified effort of each WM group has again helped our organization attain its overall financial goals for 1983. This is cause for rejoicing! A total of $237,859.77 (101.4 percent) was received and distributed to the three commissions, seminary, publications, Women's World Outreach, Travel for Third World Women to Mennonite World Conference, Missionary Supplemental Retirement Fund, Personal Growth Fund, and Bible Society. Thank you to each person, as well as to those groups which put forth extra effort and sent in additional offerings in 1983. As we participate in our total mission outreach, let us remind ourselves that we exalt Christ through responsible stewardship.

## contributors

**Ruth Unrau** (The Open Window) serves as United States vice president of the General Conference Women in Mission. She and her husband, Walt, live in North Newton, Kansas. They returned last fall from a term of service in Botswana.

**Gayle Wiebe** (Making Friends—a Visit to the Soviet Union) graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1983 and is currently teaching music and language arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg. Her hobbies include reading and knitting. She is a member of Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship.

**Cornelia Lehn** (Program 5: Our *Umsiedler* Sisters) along with her parents and three sisters came out of Russia after World War I to settle in Saskatchewan. Her interest in storytelling and writing has produced several books including: *The Sun and the Wind; Peace Be With You*; and *I Heard Good News Today*. She presently lives in Chilliwack, British Columbia.

**Jeannie Zehr** (Slice of Life) edits *Window to Mission* from her home at 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815. She also works part-time as director of the Maplewood Nursery School. She and her husband, Marvin, are the parents of a college-age son and a daughter who is a high school senior.

**Gladys Goering** (Happy Birthday . . .) lives in Moundridge, Kansas. Gladys served as our Women in Mission coordinator during the time that the birth of *Window to Mission* took place. She is also author of our WM history book, *Women in Search of Mission*.

**Joan Wiebe** (WM Office Jottings) works as Women in Mission coordinator with her office at 722 Main, Newton, Kansas. She is a pastor's wife and actively involved in the Faith Mennonite Church in Newton.

## credits

PHOTOS: Cover, p. 3, p. 5, Bernie Wiebe, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Ruth Unrau

Gayle Wiebe

Cornelia Lehn

Jeannie Zehr

Gladys Goering

## forecast

"We are the Fragrance" will be the program featured in the June-July issue of *Window to Mission*. Our title, job, and economic or social status are unimportant in God's sight. Our lives when lived with Christ as the center emit beautiful fragrances of his love.

Printed in U.S.A.

# bright ideas

APPROXIMATELY 175 to 200 people attended a senior citizen's Health Fair sponsored by the Bethany Church Women in Mission group from Freeman, South Dakota.

A pharmacist spoke about medications and a podiatrist spoke about foot care. Various tests for hearing and blood pressure and lab tests were available, as were informational pamphlets. The Cancer Society and Lung Association also had representatives there.

The women served a noon meal and lunches throughout the day.

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Northern District women celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of their annual women's retreat last fall. At the retreat the women quilted a fifteenth-anniversary quilt which was embroidered with the names of all the speakers featured during the years.

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An excellent program resource for women's groups is the bi-monthly publication, *Report*, which is published by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. To receive the publication write to Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501.

Issues on which *Report* will focus during the first half of 1984 are: women and home missions; women and third-world development; and the impact of childbearing/childlessness on women's lives.

If your WM group's program committee doesn't receive the *Report*, why don't you make sure to get on the mailing list. Suggest to your committee that the copies be kept for several years for use by future committees.

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Have you ever thought of having a WM Family Night? The First Mennonite Church in Berne, Indiana, had about 100 persons participate in their Family Night.

The whole family participated in projects. Children tore strips for bandages and men wrapped them. Women knotted comforters and quilted. Some persons quilted for the first time on a "learners' quilt."

During the evening four toy barns were constructed and a number of ceramic Christmas trees were made for the MCC Relief Sale.

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Have you ever heard of a teacup brunch? The women of the Bethel Church at Pekin, Illinois, enjoyed a special program given by a woman who collects teacups and saucers from all over the world. Other women in the group also brought teacups they had which have special meaning for them. These were displayed. After the program a brunch was served.

Many women collect teacups, or have one or two teacups which have special meaning. Why not build a meeting around sharing teacups. For devotions someone could share thoughts focusing on passages or verses in the Bible which talk about cups.

**The seventh annual "Peace-it-Together" conference** is being held March 2-4 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. The theme for this year's conference is "Frontline Peacemaking: the Power of the Powerless." The major speaker is Harry Huebner, a professor at CMBC who has just spent two years on an MCC peacemaking assignment in the Middle East. The film *Gandhi* will be featured on March 3 to demonstrate the power of those who are seemingly powerless. The conference is geared for high school youth. The cost is $15. For more information, write CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

**"Be your own commentary first,"** Gertrude Roten, professor of Greek and New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., told the 19 students enrolled in the Great Plains Seminary Extension class on the Gospel of John. The class was held during January at First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan. "It was a delight and inspiration to see the way in which Gertrude was able to combine a scholarly discipline and a devotional commitment while engaged in corporate Bible study," wrote one class member. "I also appreciated the way she was able to draw out the thinking and feeling of students."

**Fairview, Okla.**, will be the site of the Mennonite Central Committee Central States annual meeting on Feb. 25. MCC Central States constituency will hear administrators of MCC's overseas and domestic programs. Griselda Shelly, director of MCC Central States, North Newton, Kan., will report on regional activities and answer questions related to MCC programs. MCC Central States, one of four regions of MCC, promotes the worldwide ministries of MCC in 16 midwestern states.

# Twenty-seven pastors, spouses participate in study rotation

Elkhart, Ind.—Twenty-seven General Conference pastors and spouses representing four provinces and five states engaged in intensive study and enthusiastic group sharing as part of an annual study rotation plan held at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., Jan. 3-20.

This year's group brings the total number of people to participate in the program since its beginning in 1981 to more than 100.

The plan gives opportunity for three weeks of study at AMBS to every pastor/spouse within the conference. Its goals are to provide intensive study for personal spiritual growth and professional development, combined with opportunities to deepen friendships and get acquainted with other GC pastors and spouses. A weekend at Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Mich., and life together at the 1711 Guesthouse help build strong ties.

Finances for this venture are shared by participants, home congregations, districts or provinces and the General Conference's Ministerial Leadership Services and Women in Mission offices. The seminary contributes tuition costs. Plans to participate need to be laid early by congregations interested in making this available to their pastor/spouse.

*Study rotation participants (left to right): first row, John and Agatha Krueger, Brian Epp, David and Gail Wilson (with Kimberly); second row, Marcia Yoder, Peter and Marge Sawatzky, Robert and Helen Coon, Phyllis and David Wiebe; third row, Abe Krause, Mark and Sue Weidner, Verna Hiebert, Justine Funk, Steve Ratzlaff, Susan and Werner Froese, Jacob T. Friesen; back row, Vern Preheim, Earl Cater, Abe Hiebert, Peter Funk, Bernie Neufeld, David D. Wiebe and Peter H. Janzen*

Conference leadership joining pastors at this year's interterm of study included Vern Preheim, general secretary of the General Conference, Mark Weidner, conference minister for the Central District Conference and Peter Janzen, conference minister for the Conference of United Mennonite Churches of Ontario.

Course offerings this year included "Anabaptist History and Theology," taught by C. J. Dyck; "Prophetic Movements," by Millard Lind; "1 Corinthians," by Howard Charles; "Evangelism and Church Planting," by Leland Harder; and "Christian Education of Youth," led by Lavon Welty, Helmut Harder and Paula Diller Lehman. *Jacob T. Friesen*


## Administrative position
### Secretary of mission communications

**Commission on Overseas Mission**
General Conference Mennonite Church

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**Pastors of Japan's** Mennonite Brethren churches adopted a 10-year plan for church growth at their annual evangelism conference, held in Osaka Nov. 27-29, 1983. The plan calls for 16 new churches to be established by 1994, a 60 percent increase over the current 25. The conference envisions Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services staff doing pioneer church planting in all four areas except Kinki, where congregations are already well-established and able to do their own outreach.

**The David P. Neufeld Endowment Fund** has been established at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. The goal of the fund is to raise $350,000, which will be used as an endowment to pay for personnel in the practical theology program. It is expected that the interest from this endowment should provide the equivalent of one salary per year. David P. Neufeld served in churches in Coaldale, Alta., Virgil, Ont., and Clearbrook, B.C. He also served as the first executive secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

**"Support Your Local Young Adult"** is the title of an eight-hour workshop for and about young adults set for Feb. 25 at Iowa Mennonite School, Kalona. The workshop will have a strong congregational component, according to the event's four stated purposes: (1) build bridges among young adults and congregations, (2) encourage the development of supportive, whole relationships, (3) gain new understandings of issues facing many young adults and (4) explore models of involvement and methods of communication in congregations. Cost for the workshop is $7.50. For more information contact Steve Reschly, 1721 Washington St., Cedar Falls, IA 50613.

# Military taxes: a continuing agenda in 1984

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—"Were you able in 1983 to find the resources to support religious, charitable and peace efforts equal to the taxes you were required to pay for the military establishment?" The Friends Committee on National Legislation uses this question to encourage people to examine the consistency of their peace witness while filling out income tax forms.

In 1983 current military expenditures consumed 33 percent of federal appropriations, or 46 percent if the cost of past wars (interest on the national debt and veterans programs) is included, reports Delton Franz of Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section Washington Office.

During the fall of 1983 each Monthly Meeting (similar to an individual congregation) in the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (similar to a conference body) was asked to examine this question: Is the voluntary payment of war taxes consistent with the Quaker peace testimony? When the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting convenes its annual session in 1984, this question will be on the agenda.

Concern about "war taxes" is reaching beyond the traditional peace churches. The United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church have adopted statements of support for members who conscientiously oppose payment of taxes for military purposes. The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. has initiated a churchwide study on war tax resistance.

While the religious community in the United States has moved toward greater support for conscientious objection to paying taxes for military purposes, the Internal Revenue Service has beefed up its efforts to penalize tax "protests" of all kinds. An estimated 4,700 taxpayers were fined $500 each during the first eight months of 1983 for expressing their religious, moral or political views on their income tax forms. Congress enacted this automatic $500 fine as a provision of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982. The Internal Revenue Service began enforcing the penalty soon after its passage by Congress.

At least 30 people, including those of Mennonite, Quaker, Catholic and other religious backgrounds, are challenging the constitutionality of this regulation in court. Lawyers believe that the penalty violates freedom of speech and that the expression of religious convictions on income tax forms is not "frivolous." Courts are expected to issue summary judgments (decision made by a judge only, no jury) in a number of cases in the coming year.

Internal Revenue Service officials invited Mennonite representatives to meet with them in mid-December to discuss the application of the penalty for "frivolous" returns. IRS officials told U.S. Peace Section staff that the penalty is a *processing* penalty, designed to protect the efficiency of processing millions of tax returns. People who have filled their tax forms out correctly and have

# *Mennonites, Brethren take first steps in hymnal project*

Elgin, Ill.—First steps have been taken in a cooperative process that is expected to produce a Brethren/Mennonite hymnal in 1992. The first meeting of the hymnal council, held Dec. 12-14, 1983, included representatives from the General Conference Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Church and the Church of the Brethren.

Although the General Conference participated fully at this meeting, its participation in the total project is pending a March decision by the General Board. Representing the General Conference at the December meeting were Marilyn Houser Hamm, Dietrich Rempel, Orlando Schmidt and J. W. Sprunger.

Elected executive secretary of the council was Bob Bowman of the Church of the Brethren. Other Brethren council members are Nancy Faus, Jimmy R. Ross and Robin Risser Mundey.

Mary Oyer of the Mennonite Church was elected chairwoman. Other representatives of her denomination are Tony Brown, Don Augsburger and Laurence Martin.

At the December meeting, the council established the basic organizational structure, clarified the relationship of publishing bodies and began to examine similarities and differences between Mennonite and Brethren hymn traditions.

Tasks for the project will be assigned to three six-member committees—worship, text and music. Each committee will be assisted by 21 resource people.

Fairly early in the process, the council will hold a workshop to discuss theology of worship, the meaning of language and how the particular Believers' Church tradition informs worship practice. About nine theologians will be invited to meet with the council for that working session.

The next meeting, to be held in June, will include the 12 council members and the 18 committee members. *Wendy Chamberlain McFadden*

**In a letter** to Pat Robertson of the "700 Club" dated Dec. 22, 1983, Community Mennonite Church (Markham, Ill.) pastors Menno and Margaretha Ediger and deacon Richard Rose write that they are "distressed and worried by the recent slanted presentation . . . concerning the political and religious situation in El Savador." They go on to ask, "What of the stories told by good and honest Christian refugees? What worries us, Reverend Robertson, is that you have left that information out, and it contrasts starkly and dramatically with the meat-filled counters of a San Salvador supermarket or a Santa Claus visiting a hope-filled child. . . ."

**"Peacemaking and the Fine Arts"** is a unique course being offered this spring semester at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Robert Kreider, professor of peace studies, and Shirley King, assistant professor of organ, are co-coordinators of the class, which will be taught by 23 professors and experts in their fields. The course explores the interrelationship between the art of making peace with the arts of music, poetry, painting, drama, pottery making and others.

**A federal judge** in Chicago ruled Jan. 23 that Clergy and Laity Concerned and other peace groups have as much right to present their message to public school students as do armed forces recruiters. U.S. District Judge George Leighton said CALC may not be barred from distributing literature and counseling students about conscientious objection and other alternatives to military service.

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simply not paid the full amount of taxes owed are not subject to this penalty. However, taking a "war tax" credit or deduction or writing other comments on the tax form itself can result in a penalty.

The IRS officials agreed that the World Peace Tax Fund bill would be a solution if it were enacted. Abatement of the penalties already imposed is highly unlikely, but senators who helped formulate the legislation remain concerned about its application against Mennonites and Quakers in particular.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation group in North Manchester, Ind., has organized a Tax Resister's Penalty Fund to ease the financial burden on conscientious tax resisters. People can submit a request for financial assistance to cover interest and penalty charges resulting from not paying military tax.

If the request is approved, an appeal letter is sent to all people who have expressed interest in contributing to the fund. In this way, the cost of a $500 penalty could be distributed among 200 people if each paid only $2.50. In August 1983, 250 people were on the Tax Resister's Penalty Fund mailing list.

In 1981 MCC U.S. Peace Section approved guidelines for a "War Tax Witness Relief Fund." This fund was established to provide financial assistance to people within the MCC constituency who face hardship from court cases resulting from a war tax witness.

People in financial straits because they contributed the military portion of their taxes to a charitable organization and then had to face an IRS levy, property seizure or garnishment of wages would also be eligible for assistance.

To date, no money has been budgeted for the U.S. Peace Section War Tax Witness Relief Fund and the existence of the fund has not been publicized. U.S. Peace Section, however, will consider aiding those who are unable to acquire assistance from their congregation or conference.

U.S. Peace Section continues to accept contributions of redirected telephone and federal income tax money to its "Taxes for Peace" fund. Donations to this fund have supported special projects and the ongoing work of U.S. Peace Section. *Linda Schmidt*


## Pastor required

June 1984

For more details contact:
**Sterling Mennonite Fellowship**
c/o Ted Schellenberg
27 Lake Grove Bay
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## Business manager - fund raiser

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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**A Friendship Evangelism Seminar** will be held at Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., March 30-April 1. Donald Yoder, Tempe, Ariz., secretary for church planting and evangelism for the General Conference Mennonite Church, will be the resource leader. The seminar will be divided into four sessions. Registration cost is $15 before March 25, $18 thereafter. To register, send $15 to Kathryn Penner, 627 Northridge, Newton, KS 67114. Make checks payable to Faith Mennonite Church.

**The Conference of Mennonites in Canada** received 100 percent of its budgeted receipts in 1983. Contributions from churches totaled $1,439,230, an increase of 8 percent over 1982 contributions. The cash surplus in 1983 resulted from several factors: (1) there were delays in filling several staff positions which had occured through resignations; (2) there were also some delays and changes in approved programs; (3) there was higher-than-anticipated self-generated income; and (4) there has been a cautious and careful approach to spending by the various boards.

**The Dec. 10, 1983, inauguration** in Buenos Aires of Raul Alfonsin as Argentina's first democratically elected president in almost eight years brought expressions from Christian and Jewish groups of cautious optimism for the new government. The new president "has had a long and consistent record for human rights," said George Rogers, an associate of the Washington Office on Latin America, which is supported by more than 40 Christian and Jewish groups. As president, Alfonsin has pledged to have the government try to clear up questions about the fate of more than 6,000 people who disappeared in the past decade.

# *Nicaraguans study biblical basis for community development*

Managua, Nicaragua (MCC)—"The land is the base. It multiplies life. It is our survival, our sustenance. But why don't we hear more sermons about the land, about the year of Jubilee described in Leviticus 25?" Ismael Mendoza, a Nicaraguan Mennonite, asked during a workshop held here.

For three days during the last week of November, eight representatives of the Nicaraguan Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches, along with Mennonite Central Committee workers Gerald and Joetta Schlabach, met to examine Christian responsibility and role in community development.

Mendoza, an MCC employee, presented three Bible studies. The first lesson, "The Biblical Basis for Social Participation," focused on God's universal love toward all creation in Genesis and in Luke 5:45: "For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust."

Lesson two, "The Church: Servant of the Community," was based on the call of Abraham, the "true fast" of Isaiah, and the early Christian servant hymn of Philippians 2:5-11. The final lesson, "What Type of Service?" examined examples from the life and teachings of Jesus that shed light on how Christians ought to render service to their community.

This was the first of a series of workshops that MCC is coordinating during the next six months in response to the growing desire of the Nicaraguan Anabaptist churches to increase their understanding of and skills in community development.

What began as a "short-term" MCC reconstruction project in Nicaragua in late 1979, has grown into a long-term vision for development as the task of the local church. Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Nicaragua have taken an active role in the reconstruction and development of their poor country as it struggles to recover from the destruction of war and natural catastrophies.

*Ismael Mendoza, Nicaraguan Mennonite, leads Bible study during an inter-Mennonite and Brethren in Christ workshop held in Managua last November.*

They have helped construct latrines, wells, schools and clinics, responding to basic needs in their rural communities. But after four years of work many needs remain. Those who have worked closely with projects realize that they have only scraped the surface.

During 1984 each of the three Anabaptist conferences will have at least one full-time, salaried promoter who will work in communities where there are Mennonite or Brethren in Christ congregations. Promoters will be trained to lead communities in assessing their needs, deciding how to plan and execute projects, and evaluating the process and results. *Joetta Handrich Schlabach*

## Mechanic needed

**The Mennonite Church of Zaire** is requesting a mechanic experienced in gas and diesel engines. Some administrative ability is also desirable. The term of service is three years, including French language study.

For more information or to apply, contact:
John Sommer
Commission on Overseas Mission
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-5100.

## Coordinator wanted

Coordinator wanted for church-supported social services agency in small midwestern city. Person with commitment to poor based on biblical teaching and Christian faith.

Send resume to:
Church Community Services
1703 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46516.

## Residential counselor

Applications are invited by **Grosvenor Place** (MCC Manitoba) for one full-time position as residential counselor to supervise and manage a household of men on probation and parole.

Contact:
Ernie Penner
202-818 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4
(204) 774-4265.

## Employment opportunity

**Position:** Executive director

**Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree. Experience in camp and/or business management. Interest in Christian camping vital.

**Position available:** April 1, 1984.

Interested persons should submit resume and references no later than Feb. 20, 1984. Send to:
John Preheim
22967 Chestnut Lane
Goshen, IN 46526.

**American directors of evangelism** met in December for their second Washington Roundtable of Evangelism. The more than 40 church leaders met primarily for a mutual sharing of ideas and encouragement. The diverse representatives of the church bodies expressed concern to evangelize America by expanding established congregations and starting new churches. Roundtable steering committee chairman Paul Benjamin of the National Church Growth Research Center appealed to the evangelism leaders not to let up on the goal to help "the three out of five American churches that want to grow but don't know how."

*From left: Donald Yoder, Paul Benjamin and David Shenk*

**Twenty-five U.S. and Canadian** religious groups have joined to urge the U.S. and Canadian governments to take the steps necessary to reduce acid rain. The religious bodies called for drastic reductions in sulphur and nitrogen emissions which, upon combining in the atmosphere, fall back to earth as corrosive sulphuric and nitric acid.

## MCC part of four-agency delegation to Vietnam

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Representatives of four non-governmental agencies spent seven days in Vietnam, Jan. 6-12, meeting with high-level government officials and traveling in the countryside around Hanoi. The purpose of the visit was to review existing relationships and to emphasize the need for regular visits by the agencies to monitor projects and strengthen dialogue.

Mennonite Central Committee representative Bert Lobe, who was a member of the delegation, says, "We wanted to demonstrate that we have common interests and seek to cooperate, despite the fact that our constituencies are unique." Vietnam-American Society, called Viet-My, hosted the group.

In addition to Lobe, there were three other representatives: Dave Elder from the American Friends Service Committee, Lonnie Turnipseed from Church World Service and Joel Charney of OXFAM America. These four agencies provide humanitarian assistance in Kampuchea and Vietnam.

At the end of the visit, the four representatives reaffirmed their desire to provide humanitarian assistance to needy people there and their commitment to work with and assist each other so that this aid can be more effective.

They also expressed a hope that the United States would take new initiatives to resolve the present stalemate in Indochina that results in isolation and hardship for the Indochinese.

Ha Van Lau, deputy foreign minister, told the four about the negative effects of present measures that isolate Vietnam from many other nations. He also called attention to the continuing needs of Amerasian children and expressed hope that more Amerasian children could be received in the United States.

The team reported that the government has increased food rations because of increased rice production. The delegation saw new clothes and new construction projects in Hanoi. The people they met while walking in Hanoi were extremely friendly, they reported. Some of the representatives felt the atmosphere was more relaxed than on earlier visits.

They also saw serious needs and major shortages. Even with increased food rations, Vietnamese are still malnourished. Transportation is largely dependent on worn-out equipment; the lack of spare parts continues to cause major difficulties.

In the countryside, the four representatives saw poor roads, makeshift bridges and patched clothing—reminders of the hardships that the people continue to face.

The four agencies plan to take concrete steps to increase their assistance to Vietnam: Each agency will seek licenses for new projects from the U.S. government; they will consider joint responses to emergency and disaster needs; they will assist each other in gathering information and contacts in Vietnam; they will invite three people from Vietnam to visit the United States in late November if visas can be secured.

They hope that as a result of their January visit opportunities for staff from the four agencies to visit Vietnam on a regular basis can be improved.


### Minister needed

**First United Mennonite Church** of Vancouver is inviting applications for leading minister position. Should be able to preach in English and German. Congregation consists of 570 members with full-time assistant minister and a youth minister.

Further information available from:
Victor Dyck, chairperson
3320 Phillips Ave.
Burnaby, BC V5A 2W7
Phone (604) 420-5469.


## *Evangelism congress calls for recognition of responsibility*

Belo Horizonte, Brazil—The growing missionary fervor of Brazilian Christians was demonstrated at the first nationwide Congress on Evangelism held last October in Belo Horizonte.

The congress drew 2,100 evangelical (Protestant) leaders from 80 denominations. The 20 Mennonites attending included leaders in the Brazilian Mennonite churches as well as missionaries sponsored by the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference) and Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church). This group met and affirmed the final statement issued by the congress.

In addition to studying how to evangelize Brazil and the world, church leaders also looked at their country's problems of violence, corruption, poverty and prejudice. Although some leaders in the Catholic church have become involved in these issues, the evangelical church has generally remained silent, focusing on evangelism.

In the final statement, congress participants repented for past indifference to "violence, injustice, inequity and deprivation." They called for a "clear proclamation by word and life of the Gospel in its totality for all men (sic) in Brazil," and "a deeper commitment to our missionary responsibility."

The importance of Brazil's role was noted by Kay Yuasa of the Holiness Church. "In South America no other country has so many common borders with neighboring countries. No other country has so many evangelicals, so many publishing houses, so many people."

Although organizers disavowed any acceptance of liberation theology, many leaders struggled with the role of the church in changing society and challenging corruption in government.
*Angela Rempel*

# workers

*Rita Bardell*, Freeport (Ill.) Church, began a one-year Mennonite Voluntary Service term Aug. 30, 1983, as secretary for Mennonite Home Repair in Wichita, Kan. Her parents are Harry and Grace Bardell of Freeport.

*Suzanne* and *Terry Beck*, Federal Way (Wash.) Christian Church, began two-year MVS terms Aug. 6, 1983, as teachers at Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz. Both have bachelor degrees from Seattle Pacific University. Her parents are William and Elizabeth Baxter of Sumner, Wash.; his are Wesley and Ruth Beck of Spokane, Wash.

*Bardell*

*S. Beck*

*T. Beck*

*Beeler*

*Kristin Beeler*, Lake Bluff, Ill., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 1, 1983, working with troubled teens at The Shelter in Seattle. She has a bachelor's degree from Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C. Her parents are Thomas Beeler of Lake Bluff, and Janet Shaw.

*Duane Ediger*, Arvada (Colo.) Church, began a one-year MVS term Nov. 26, 1983, working in housing rehabilitation in Oklahoma City. His parents are Peter and Marjorie Ediger of Arvada.

*Curtis Rempel*, Mount Royal Church, Saskatoon, began a one-year MVS term Oct. 24, 1983, as a home repair worker in Oklahoma City. His parents are Elmer and Edna Rempel of Saskatoon.

*Ediger*

*Rempel*


## Accounting and business

Full-time teaching position in accounting and business at **Eastern Mennonite College**.

Send resume to:
Dean Albert Keim
Eastern Mennonite College
Harrisonburg, VA 22801.



## HOW MUCH WILL YOU SPEND FOR MEDICAL CARE THIS YEAR?

$1,500 was the average each of us in the U.S. paid last year for medical care . . . through insurance, direct payments to doctors and hospitals, and taxes for government medical assistance programs. Total U.S. medical care expenses exceeded $350 billion in 1983.

Medical care expenses take more of our income each year. In 1977, 8.8¢ of every dollar was spent on medical care. In 1982, **10.5¢ of each dollar** went for medical care.

To cover these constantly increasing costs, health insurance companies must charge higher premiums. Mennonite Mutual Aid also must increase its premiums for Medical Expense Sharing Plan members under age 65. Increases will vary by age, deductible, and state of residence, but most will range between 17% and 29% . . . and will be effective on Certificate anniversary dates, beginning April 1, 1984.

What can we do about the problem?
- ☑ Work at **wellness**, so we need less medical care.
- ☑ Choose coverage that allows us to take **personal responsibility** for initial expenses.
- ☑ Select doctors who allow us to **participate in care** and decisions concerning our health.

Through MMA, Mennonites can share each other's medical expenses. During this difficult time, let us continue to "bear each other's burdens."

Mennonite Mutual Aid Goshen, IN 46526

# LETTERS

## Need help on marriage

"A More Excellent Way for Marriage" by Ronald S. Kraybill (July 19, 1983, issue) was thought provoking. As an Indian ex social worker engaged on the question of marriage and family in the framework of our culture, I would be happy to exchange insights with any readers.

I would like to know how marriage poses problems in the Western cultural milieu and your approaches to solve them.

Any reader who has sensitivity, empathy, wider human concern and would not mind contributing a little financial help in my work would also be eternally thanked.

From my side, the trade-off could be furnishing insights of non-Western societies. *John Alexander, Seven Oaks, Bala Hisar, Mussoorie (U.P.), India*

Jan. 9

## How about proper English?

I would like to make some requestings for one of our Mennonite English scholars to offer some observings on the recent frequent usings of gerund plural for substantive in our denominational publishings. Yours with respectings, *Monty Ledford, Route 2, Box 1-18, Kempton, PA 19529*

Jan. 13

## Selected movie reviews

I read *The Mennonite* with great interest as a rule. But I don't understand why a review of the film *Yentl* was printed.

We discourage the attending of movies unless they have a tie with Christianity. You may say that most Christians watch TV movies. True, but it is a lot easier to switch it off than to walk out of a theater when you've paid admission.

As a regular reader I'd rather not have film reviews other than Christian or history based. *Mrs. J. Funk, Box 91, Plum Coulee, MB R0G 1R0*

Jan. 13

## TV is not acceptable medium

I am offended by Barth Hague's "Has TV Come Out of the Mennonite Closet?" (Dec. 20, 1983, issue). I expect far more insight from a person with Television Awareness Training.

I do not have a television. I stopped watching some years ago as the result of a period of growing suspicion and study of the medium. I concluded that television is one of the most evil forces at work on the face of the earth today. I have argued that in person and from the pulpit.

I disagree with the whole of Hague's article, but one line deserves special comment. He says, "I think we proved to ourselves that television holds great potential for communicating important program material despite its cancerous commercialization." If what it is important to communicate is destructive and/or violent, then I think he is correct. If *The Day After* is at all successful in making people aware of the dangers of the arms race, then it is only because it did well what television does best—portray violence.

Violence works on television. It holds an audience the way love, friendship, peace and wholesomeness simply are unable to do. And when it comes to reconciliation, television only knows the passionate kiss.

As for the cancerous commercialization of television, I cannot image a noncommercial TV network of any importance. I say this as two of Canada's attempts to provide multicultural and sophisticated programming have just gone bankrupt, and a third engages in a desperate struggle to keep afloat. The only thing that seems to keep any network going is the same commerical shlock that everyone else produces.

The really interesting stuff on television is the commercials. If you don't believe me, just examine how entranced your children become every time a commercial comes on, even while watching an exciting (i.e. violent) show.

That says nothing of the changes in brain development, attention spans, creativity, expectations of violence, expectations of materialistic lifestyle and family behavior patterns that television fosters.

Yes, let all the pioneers come out of the closet. Yes, let us all admit to our TV watching. Then let us engage in some good church discipline, repent and cease this practice.

Remember Paul's words in Romans 12:1-3? We are all being transformed, but whether it is toward this world or toward God is up to us. *Bruce Hiebert, #3-635 E. 44 Ave., Vancouver, BC V5W 1U4*

Jan. 16

## Was it pure coincidence?

Thank you for *The Mennonite*. The Aug. 16 issue arrived on Nov. 22, the day after I had a long discussion with a fellow MCC worker about "intellectual" and "emotional" religion. John A. Esau's article "The College Related Church" expressed my feelings so articulately, I could not help but agree with everything he wrote. In fact, had I not just argued the side of intellectual Christianity, I might have considered the perfect timing of that edition's arrival in Maiduguri more than pure coincidence.

Thank you again for sending faith, hope and insight our way in the form of *The Mennonite. Rick Janzen, c/o C.O. C.I.N. PMB 1028, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria, West Africa*

Jan. 18

## No humor in cartoon

I just couldn't believe it when I saw my name used in a cartoon in *The Mennonite* (Jan. 3 issue).

I looked for some humor in it, thinking it had to have some good purpose, but I found none. Then I thought perhaps it was supposed to have some true spiritual value, but I found none of that either. In fact, I could find no meaning at all.

What connection did the singing of the hymn and discussing the "pick of the flicks" have in the life of the church or my life? Or was it referring to a cigarette lighter? Perhaps, but surely not! It was on the "film" page so it must have something to do with reviewing films. I realize that there may be a demand for the reviews, but it's a puzzle to me to have a need for someone to make up my mind for me when I am able to do that for myself. A film is either worth watching or not. If it's offensive, turn it off.

There is much to be learned and gained from our church periodical, but as far as I am concerned this just didn't belong. The space could have been put to better use. *Martha Friesen, 1601 Cedar St., Henderson, NE 68371*

Jan. 24

*Editorial assistant's note: Humor serves various purposes—to provide merriment, to comment on certain practices or ideas, to provoke thought, to help us all to not take ourselves too seriously. Joel's cartoon has evidently provoked thought. Perhaps it also comments on the influence of the surrounding culture in the church. But we also inserted it where we did to poke fun at ourselves. His use of the name, I'm sure, intended no offense.*

# Churches are growing in many countries

*Brian Epp*

Jesus said, "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The *World Christian Encyclopedia* reports there are Christian churches in every inhabited country on earth. Every week approximately 1,000 new churches are established in Asia and Africa alone. They begin as small struggling groups of believers meeting in a home or under a tree or in a school. But each one constitutes a definite group of believers who are committed to each other to meet regularly to worship God, to help each other grow in the faith and to reach out in love to the unchurched around them.

In some countries—such as Afghanistan, Libya and Albania—there is no growth. In Israel, France and Bangladesh, growth is slow and hard. In a few places, such as Central America, Korea, China, Indonesia and Africa, Christianity is growing out of control.

**Latin America.** The Protestant churches in parts of Latin America are growing three times the rate of the population. In 1900 there were only 50,000 Protestants in Latin America. The number passed 1 million in the 1930s, 2 million in the 1940s, 5 million in the 1950s, 10 million by the 1960s, and by 1980 the figure was over 20 million. The Reformation is still going on there. Anabaptist churches in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua grew by 20 percent in 1982.

**Africa.** The churches are growing even more rapidly in Africa. There were 10 million Christians in Africa in 1900. Today there are 200 million, and by the year 2000 it is predicted that there will be over 400 million. From 9 percent of Africa being Christian in 1900, it is projected to grow to 48 percent by 2000. The Anabaptist churches have grown by 40 percent in 1982 in Zaire; one church now has 5,700 members.

**Korea.** In Korea 100 years ago there were no churches. Now in the city of Seoul alone there are 6,000. Six new churches are started in South Korea every day. The Presbyterian church began in Scotland, but now the world's largest Presbyterian congregation is in Korea with 50,000 members. The Methodist church began in England, but now the world's largest Methodist congregation is in Korea with 10,000 members.

The Assembly of God began in the United States, but now the largest Assembly of God church is in Korea with 270,000 members. They hold seven services each Sunday and use closed-circuit television. The key to their growth has been the establishment of 19,000 home cell groups, each with a trained leader who takes the responsibility of the spiritual well-being of 10 to 15 families. Because of this approach, no one in the massive church feels lost or uncared for.

**China.** The greatest surprise in church growth has been China. When missionaries were expelled in 1949-1950 and the bamboo curtain fell, hopes were not high. At the time there were about 1 million Chinese believers.

Massive efforts were made by the Communist government to extinguish the church. Pastors were jailed, Bibles were confiscated and burned, church buildings were closed, Bible schools were disbanded, Christian literature was outlawed, both lay leaders and clergy suffered humiliation, imprisonment and torture. Most outside observers thought the Gang of Four and the Cultural Revolution would be successful in wiping out the church. But as the bamboo curtain began to lift in the late '70s and news began to filter out, it became clear that the Holy Spirit had remained in China and was doing mighty things. The first word was that the 1 million believers were still there. Then the estimates continually grew to 3 or 5 million, then 8 or 10 million, and now even conservative estimates range between 30 and 50 million.

*One of the astounding discoveries about church growth was that of the church behind the bamboo curtain in China. Not only in the churches but in house meetings such as this one in Pu Ko (Jiangsu province), today there are many more believers in China than there were prior to the expulsion of expatriate missionaries.*

**Kampuchea.** Missionary work had been difficult in Cambodia (Kampuchea)

*God's Spirit continues at work even when we might not be aware of it. These Indians, mostly farmers in southern Colombia, formed a church with the help of a self-taught pastor.*

through the years. Then the Pol Pot government took over and began a horrible program of genocide. Large numbers of Cambodians fled to the refugee camps across the border of Thailand. There they opened their hearts to the gospel. The Christian and Missionary Alliance reported that 25,000 became believers in one year. This is five times the total number of converts that the missionaries had seen in over 50 years of evangelistic work.

**Indonesia.** The church in Indonesia is also growing. With 70 congregations among the Anabaptist churches, its membership has grown from 30,000 in 1978 to 50,000 in 1982.

**Japan.** From 1982 to 1983 the church in Japan has grown by 20 percent.

Many factors make churches grow. I think that if the apostle Paul were living today he would be amazed at the missionary outreach and growth around the world. He would probably think his missionary journeys were a small thing compared to what God is doing around the world today.

**Missionaries to the fourth world.** Missionary personnel are always on the lookout for new words or phrases to define what is happening in the world today. We can no longer send missionaries to the heathen, pagans or natives, for so often now our missionaries are going to places and cities which are bigger than New York City and the people are better educated. Missionary statesman Peter Wagner's new term for where to send missionaries is "the fourth world." He states, "For some years now, the term third world has been in use. There is still some debate as to its precise meaning, but most people who use it refer to those nations that refuse to align themselves with either the Communist bloc, headed by Russia, or the capitalist bloc, headed by the United States, and that have decided to be their own masters on the international scene. This world includes, therefore, most of the nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Most of the third world is yellow, black, brown and red, and most of its people live south of the 30th parallel north.

*"By* fourth world *I mean all those peoples, no matter where they are found, who have yet to commit themselves to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord" (Peter Wagner in* On the Crest of the Wave*).*

"*Fourth world* is not meant to describe some other form of international political alliance or non-alliance, although some attempts have been made to use it to designate the poorest of the poor. My intention is to shift the focus to spiritual things. By fourth world I mean all those people, no matter where they are found, who have yet to commit themselves to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. There are fourth-world people in Russia, there are some in Africa, there are some in Chicago, and there are some in every other tribe, tongue and nation" (from Wagner, *On the Crest of the Wave*).

To whom much is given, of them much is required. Who are the people in your fourth world?

Bruce Leichty, editor of the Mennonite World Conference *Newsletter*, reports on church growth in the Anabaptist churches worldwide. In five countries they grew by 20 percent in 1982: Japan, Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador. In two areas the churches grew by 40 percent: Zaire and Tanzania. Some of the most exciting growth was recorded in Indonesia (as reported above). God is at work today through his revived church.

The General Conference Mennonite Church *Handbook of Information* (1983-1984) lists its membership in other countries: Zaire (43,552), India (4,246), Brazil (1,430), Paraguay (1,349), Taiwan (980), Japan (800), Colombia (727) and Mexico (350). Most of these believers have been won to Christ through the outreach of our Commission on Overseas Mission.

*Brian Epp is youth pastor of the Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, NE 68371. His article is based on a Reformation Sunday sermon in October 1983.*

*The small rural churches, once thought to be on the verge of extinction, are discovering that "small is beautiful," and there is also a place for them.*

# Be careful—God answers prayer

*Marion Keeney Preheim*

"The congregation has gone down three times," says pastor Ken Buller about Hillcrest Mennonite Church at Grande Prairie, Alta. He was referring to the fact that this church has nearly closed three times since it opened 22 years ago.

At the last threat of closure, three members felt the church should continue because when they prayed they sensed "the Lord's word that there was something more."

The youth were also committed to the church. Four of them in particular prayed and invited others to come. As a result, the youth group mushroomed to 60 teens, mostly from the high school and other churches.

"Soon we had studies for youth, college/career and adults, averaging 100 people a week at our house," says Ricki Buller. "Gradually the congregation came to life again." It soon became obvious that they were outgrowing their small church building.

More things happened through prayer and trying to discern the Lord's will. The group asked Ken to accept a full salary even though they were short on finances. Within two months they were able to pay it.

Subsequently they decided to buy a Christian bookstore owned by Ricki. As a counselor, she and Fred Brown, a psychiatrist, opened offices at the back of the store. The bookstore staff ministered to people who sought out a place to talk about their problems.

One member had a vision that the church should own a building. Soon a place was found. It was a school owned by the Sisters of the Holy Cross who had been praying for two years that they could sell it for a special ministry. The Hillcrest group prayed in a small upper room and discerned that they should buy it.

"They accepted our bid above all the others even though it was about half of the highest offer," Ken says about their $350,000 bid. "Their understanding was that we would develop a renewal center."

The building the group purchased has three floors of 8,000 square feet each. They sold their small church building for $137,000 and renovated the school at a cost of $100,000.

Part of the building provided for residents. Four families moved into apartments to form a Christian community. They did not live communally. Rooms for as many as 10 people needing counseling were in the dormitory section. It was hoped these could find fellowship with others. The counseling and residential aspect was called the Hillcrest Centre.

"The city as such has come to know about the operation," says Ricki. "We have more people now than we can handle." Ken remembers two people who "would not be alive if we hadn't picked them up."

Residents who are there for counseling have a daily routine. About half go out to search for jobs. Those not working attend Ken's daily group sessions. They discuss feelings about themselves and others. Much counseling goes on in an informal way during daily living. They also attend the church's weekly Bible sessions.

The Hillcrest Church did not stop with just a program for counseling. They also considered opening a school for grades 1 to 12. "What the Lord is doing with his church was our first consideration," Ken said. Thus they did careful planning before opening a school in the new location.

The staff is using the Alberta government curriculum to fit in with the provincial structure. They emphasize the Christ-centered approach largely in daily living. The church also began a day-care operation called Kids' Korner to serve the congregational and community needs. "We were going strictly by the Lord's guidance," Ricki says about this venture. They now have 30 children attending.

In the counseling program, school and day care, most of the staff members are volunteers. Church members serve as counselors and teachers on an unpaid basis. Church women cook for residents and for a Sunday noon meal to which everyone is invited.

The Hillcrest Mennonite Church service is held in the renovated building, using a large classroom. Attendance is between 100 and 120, with 50 people holding membership.

What has happened to the church is unexplainable in human terms. All along they have felt the Lord's leading. The Lord had promised something more when they prayed for guidance, but how much more amazes even them.

*Ricki and Ken Buller give leadership to the renewal process at Hillcrest.*

*Marion Keeney Preheim, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, is a staff writer for General Conference News Service.*

# MEDITATION

## Who serves in MVS and why?

"As a Christian I feel called to this type of service." "So much has been given to me. . . . I want to share with others." "For as long as I can remember I have wanted to serve." "I feel that serving helps me to follow the example Jesus set for us." These were some comments volunteers made at a recent Mennonite Voluntary Service orientation. Although they express themselves in different ways, all share a remarkable commitment to putting the needs of others before their own wants and desires. They challenge a society that assumes self-gratification is the highest motivation.

MVS has 140 women and men serving in 31 communities in the United States and Canada. Volunteers are working with Hispanics, the elderly, the young and the poor. They serve as teachers, social workers, organizers and builders. They struggle to heal the hurts of those society would forget, to change the structures which trap and crush the poor, to point toward the peace God would have for the world and to witness to the lordship of Jesus Christ in all things. Volunteers share a commitment of putting faith into action.

Not everyone understands this kind of commitment. One volunteer laughed, "My friends think I have joined some sort of cult." Another shared the painful opposition of his family, "They think I am throwing my life away."

It is difficult for those not personally acquainted with voluntary service to understand MVS. The priorities of volunteers are so different from those of society at large that some people assume some form of brainwashing must be at work. What else could explain an otherwise normal person sacrificing a well-paying position, moving to a poor community and working for room, board and $35 a month?

Mennonites are more familiar with voluntary service, but we too may have misconceptions. Members of congregations respond to presentations on MVS by saying, "I would love to serve, but. . . ." They may feel they are too old, their skills are not needed or some other factor would keep them from serving. Generally they are wrong. MVS has positions for people of all ages, including those who have retired or are in mid-career. Families as well as singles are placed into a wide variety of assignments.

Jan and Earl Phillips have just completed an assignment in Bacavi, Ariz., a village on the Hopi Indian Reservation, where they served with their children, Rebecca and Jeremy. They report, "Leaving is quite difficult. In the past few days several people have talked to us. One mother said she used to worry about where her children were playing. Now she knows where to find them—at the church! One dear, elderly lady told us we couldn't go; we are her best friends."

The church also reaps rewards from voluntary service. Volunteers return with a new awareness of needs in their own community, with deepened convictions and strengthened commitment. Some experience dramatic changes in goals. Many have entered seminary or long-term careers in missions and Christian service as a result of their experiences. Volunteers from other church backgrounds often first encounter Mennonites through MVS assignments. Many become Mennonites themselves.

Mennonite Voluntary Service is one expression of the General Conference Mennonite Church's commitment to respond to God's call to follow Christ in sharing with others through service.

*David Orr*

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 20th-century martyr and author of *The Cost of Discipleship*, wrote, "Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship, and Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ."

Mennonite Voluntary Service is in many respects a journey into weakness and a leadership of suffering servanthood. It is a commitment to Paul's teaching "that the power of God might be made known in our weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

A special appreciation is hereby expressed to Chuck Neufeld, MVS associate director/east United States, 3248 W. 163 St., Markham, IL 60426, for his assistance in preparing the features and graphics about MVS in this issue.

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Lorna Henkel served in the Markham, Ill., MVS unit. Presently in transition, the Henkels live at 105 First Ave., Secaucus, NJ 07094.

Kim France, 5442 S. Harper, #108, Chicago, IL 60615, used to be part of the ACTS (Artists Communicating Through Service) MVS unit in Chicago. Even though the unit was terminated some years ago, many Christian artists continue to be in touch and learn from one another.

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THE MENNONITE

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# editorial

## MVS challenges our chicken game

Most adults play the chicken game. We jockey for the best place in society's "pecking order." Even in church, we sit in special places and only with certain people. Who greets you and who do you stop to greet? Some people are seldom if ever nominated, others are always put on the ballot.

We are so much like chickens. In every open poultry pen there is no peace until it is clearly established who is first and who is next, down to who is last.

**Heirs to a towel.** Instead of the largest office with the biggest desk and nameplate, Jesus, on his eve of dying, left us the legacy of a towel—to wash feet. Can you imagine it?

His disciples were like you and me. Lord, tell us who will become the first vice president in your estate. We all know of estate hassles among believers after a loved one dies. Surely God's children deserve special treatment in the legacies of believers who go ahead of us. Don't we?

**Freedom to serve.** Jesus challenges us to be more than chickens. He does not remove order, leadership and authority, but he abolishes the chicken game. Christians are not to seek the highest position nor the lowest position. He defines our role in terms of *function*. "You know . . . rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant . . . even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve. . ." (Matthew 20:25-28).

There is authority also in the towel. It's clear in the upper room scene. The disciples sat with feet caked in dust and mud. They knew someone should wash their feet. But that role suggested condescension. Ignore it rather than talk about it. So typical even among believers today.

When Jesus shows the freedom to gird himself with a towel and start washing feet, it is terribly embarrassing. Peter creates a scene before permitting Jesus to do his feet.

Slowly it seems to hit Peter (maybe it was only at the impulse stage) that if you say no to the chicken game of position, suddenly you are free to serve. Then he wants Jesus to wash his whole body. Jesus says it's enough to do the feet. That adequately illustrates your freedom as a servant.

**MVS and the local church.** Many GCs are not sure about MVS. It feels threatening to them, and rightly so. It is an upside down application of society's values and of many Christians' lifestyle. MVS points us toward self-denial and service. We are afraid that will make our churches and our personal lives less than they can be.

I wish we could understand the chicken game we so often play. There are so many among us who wonder whether MVS contributes toward anti-patriotism, anti-church and anti-evangelicalism.

The towel is a symbol of service. MVS has 140 servants who serve the United States and Canada. The natural outgrowth of long-term MVS units is a congregation (see our lead article). MVS at its best is a beautiful bearer of the Good News in Christ (see inside article).

I believe we as a whole General Conference need another look at the towel and Jesus' words in John 13:14b, ". . . wash one another's feet." In our preparation to discuss war taxes, withholding and registration, let's begin by covenanting together to each dedicate at least a year or two to the "towel" in our countries. Three years ago Robert Hull proposed a sabbatical service idea (*The Mennonite*, Jan. 27 and Feb. 3, 1981, issues) that still deserves sincere consideration. It challenges us to stop the chicken game and to choose deliberately—as a conference—to become servants and to promote Christian service because of Christ and for all people created by God.

**MVS also is mission and evangelism.** MVS has gone ahead of us to show the way. Praise the Lord that we have almost the same number of volunteers in MVS as we have workers in overseas mission. The two complement each other.

If you and I love our Lord and the people created by God, we too will say no to the chicken game and instead consider seriously our covenant to serve as Jesus calls us and shows us. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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## Inside this issue

Life and death are not far apart

If I should die before I wake . . .

Mennonite World Conference: a capsule view

Death exploded my hopes

# Life and death

"Your daughter is very sick," the doctor told the baby's parents. The little girl's body was quickly becoming dehydrated as her temperature climbed. Nothing would stop it. She needed fluids desperately, but she refused even water. The hospital personnel had done what they could. The child's life hung in the balance. As a last resort, the mother asked permission from a nurse to give the baby some boiled water from their own well at home. *It worked.* The baby willingly drank the familiar-tasting water and the fever began to subside.

I was that baby who nearly died, but how was I to know that 15 years later the tables would be turned? I stood beside my father as a doctor told him, "She probably won't live through the night. You better call your family." This time it was Dad's wife—my mother—who was dying. It was not the first time Dad heard those words. Death had already dug deeply into the lives of my parents. The early years of their marriage were etched with funeral after funeral as seven of their family members died within five years. Somehow my parents withstood the trauma. Together they quietly picked up life's pieces again and again.

This time Dad heard the heartbreaking news without his wife. He was alone, except for me. I was a high school sophomore. My brothers and sister were already grown and gone from home. I felt helpless. I had no cure. Running home to get boiled water would not help.

I looked into my mother's eyes, but she did not see me. I touched her hand and told her I loved her, but she did not hear me. An ambulance had rushed her to the nearest small-town hospital. Prior to that, she had not felt well for two days. Then, without warning, her body shook with convulsions. After that she lay unconsciously still.

Everything happened so quickly that I felt numb and confused. I had no idea what lay ahead; even the next minute seemed to hang in the balance.

That night, exhausted but filled with tension that demanded release, I was unable to sleep. Like a giant roller coaster, my thoughts whirred to the heights of my parents' love for me and the Christian values they had taught me. When my thoughts hit bottom, however, I also thought of my reluctance to help Mom wash the dishes and of the unkind words I sometimes had said to her. I had tried to be a good daughter, but that night my failures stared me in the face.

*Cynthia Goerzen*

The windows to life and the windows to death so often exist in intimate proximity to one another.

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# are not far apart

From daily family devotions I had learned to go to God personally with the joys and burdens of my life. Now I had one more request to make—a plea for my mother's life. I did not want to let her go. I was face to face with the end of her life. Time was running out. What right did I have to ask God for my mother's life? What could I do to deserve God's love? The night seemed dark and lonely as I wrestled with those questions until finally I realized it would be impossible to earn God's love. He loved simply because I belonged to him. I was his and he would love me forever. A quiet peacefulness began to fill me until my pleading stopped and I drifted off to sleep.

A few hours later, Dad and I watched emergency personnel lift Mom into an ambulance once more, this time for the six-hour trip to the largest medical center in Kansas. The Sunday morning air was cool and calm as Dad and I climbed into the ambulance beside the driver. Mom was still unconscious and we still had no idea what was wrong with her. Confusion and uncertainty lingered, but my panic was gone. Of course I have needed to struggle with the lessons of trust and surrender since then, but I have been able to build on the foundation of that experience.

As we traveled to the large hospital we knew our home church was praying for us that morning. Other friends and relatives were praying too. God was in control. Too often we seem to forget that God is in control when death occurs as well as when he permits life to go on.

That day God chose to heal my mother. There was no medical explanation for her sudden recovery late that evening.

Over 13 years have passed since that September weekend, and my mother still lives as healthy and strong as usual.

More recently another mother's life hung in the balance. This time it was my husband's mother. Cancer of the lymph glands had been diagnosed two years earlier, but for a while her condition seemed stable. Then new spots of cancer showed up in one place after another, but each time the doctors tried a different treatment and the family seemed hopeful that the cancer could be limited. "I don't even mind that my hair fell out," she told me. "I just hope the new medication controls the cancer."

The day we learned that yet another spot had been found in her lungs my husband's countenance darkened. A 6′2″ carpenter and electrician, he is a strong man in body and spirit, and not easily discouraged. However, that day the sun went behind a cloud in his heart. The nagging suspicion that had been bottled up so long finally burst out, demanding attention. He sensed his mother's life on earth would not last much longer. As we had done before, we reminisced about her life. We talked, we prayed, we cried. Late into the night and into the morning hours we shared the burden together. By dawn somehow the sun came out again for my husband and peace filled his soul.

The days grew long and hard for my mother-in-law. Constant pain racked her body. She had no desire to eat. She became weaker and slipped into periods of unconsciousness. Hospitalizations were more frequent and more extended. Finally we knew she had been hospitalized for the last time.

Life was hard for all of us. Our hearts ached as our loved one suffered and we could only stand helplessly at her bedside. We could barely keep the cogs of our own lives running smoothly. Life became a tight routine of work, eat, go to the hospital, come home late, sleep a few hours and wake exhausted only to start the cycle all over again. Throughout the last difficult months, my husband graciously bore the burden. He did not have to worry whether his mother lived or died; that was God's problem. My husband knew he loved his mother dearly and wanted the best for her. In his heart, death was conquered. It had lost its sting.

Eventually the call came, "Come quickly, she's failing fast." A little later, as we hovered around my mother-in-law's hospital bed with the rest of the family, I suddenly became aware of the silence that surrounded us. We all seemed to be waiting for something. Then out of the stillness we heard a voice. With her head leaned forward, my mother-in-law began to pray. Her words were firm and clear. She seemed to know that her earthly life was nearly over. Her voice had no anguish or bitterness. She shed no tears. She did not plead for life or healing. She merely asked that God's grace be sufficient. As her strength faded, she repeated, "And bless each one of them, and bless each one, bless each one." Then she leaned back on her pillow, breathless, exhausted.

We miss her. We remember her cheerful voice and her smiling face. We praise God for the life she lived on earth and we praise God for her new life in heaven.

Two mothers, one daughter. Three times the balance deliberated between life and death. Twice it tipped toward life, once toward death. Always it tipped toward heaven. •



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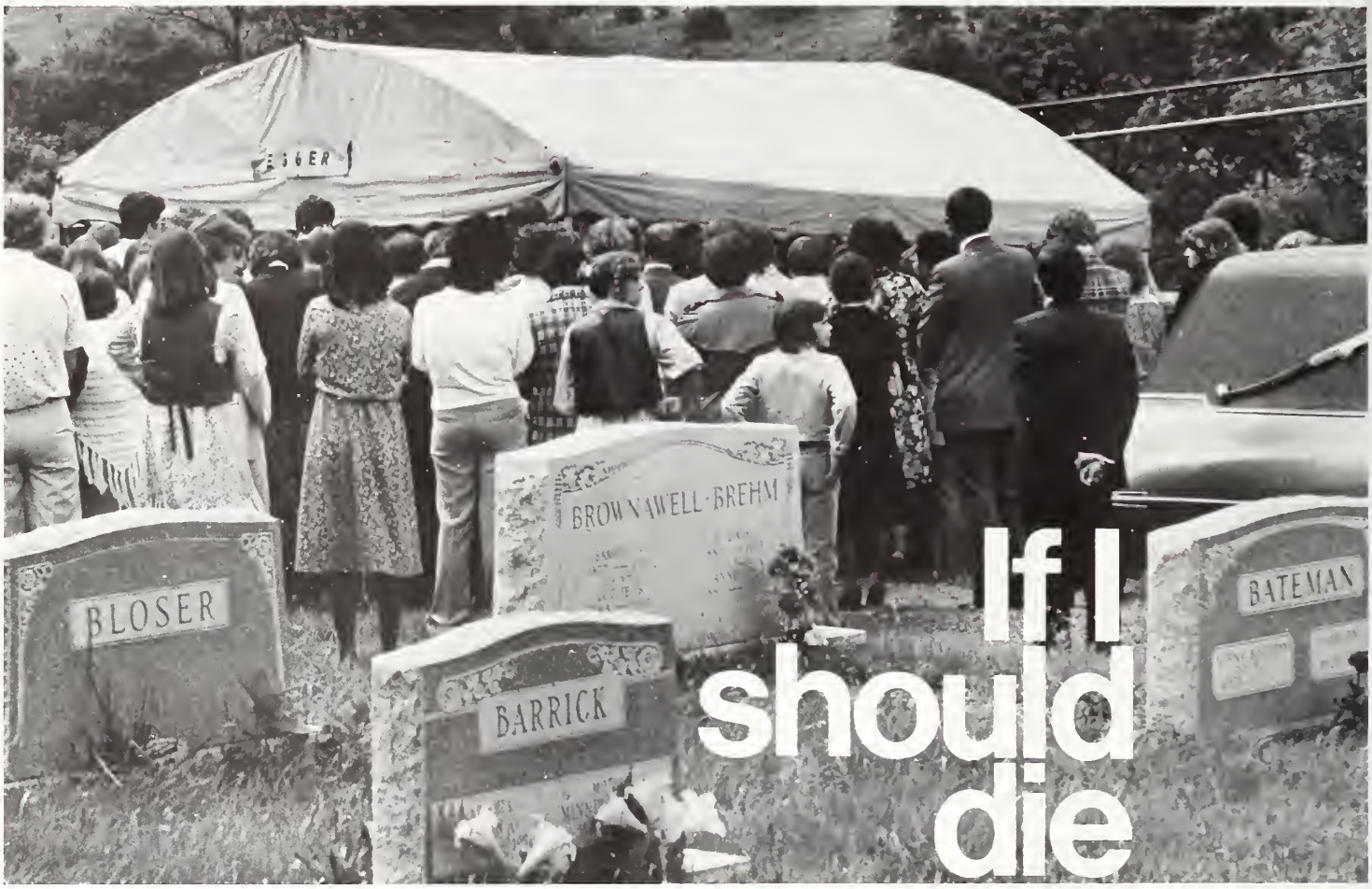


# If I should die before I wake...

*Dan Nissley, Jr.*

As a child I was often reminded how untimely death can be. My father was a funeral director in our district of the Amish church in northern Indiana.

I admired my father because he was helping families through a difficult period, a time when they needed both support and understanding. But I also found myself having ambivalent feelings about this constant reminder of death. My thoughts kept turning to the process of dying, yet I struggled to avoid thinking about it.

I recall one evening when, not being in the mood for an original bedtime prayer, I knelt by my bed and began the familiar children's prayer: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake. . . ." Die before I wake? Again I started to pray: "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep . . . Amen." With a thorough job of editing completed, I hopped into bed and tried to go to sleep.

I was troubled, because as I lay there I began to make a lot of promises to God of what I would do for him if only he would allow me to live a long life.

Many people, both young and old, are genuinely afraid to die. Recently ABC TV's "20/20" program devoted a program segment to a group called "The Eternal Flame." Their leader, Charles Brown, makes claims which appeal to those afraid of death. "I am the very flesh, bone and blood body of Jesus Christ, who has been revealed in every cell and atom of your body." The former nightclub singer and department store salesman continues, "I have abolished your death."

My initial reaction was that this must be a group which preys on the financially disadvantaged. But according to this report, people who have been successful in business, active in church activities and devoted to their families are becoming involved with this group.

"Christians need to re-evaluate their attitude toward death. Dying is a fact of the human experience which we must face," says a pastor who has counseled both the terminally ill and the bereaved. He goes on to say, "Death is the joyful release from the limitations of the human body, which may at times be tortured with pain and disease."

If death is the joyful release, why do we struggle with it as we do? In the account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus, Jesus makes a dramatic statement and asks a burning question of Martha after she has told him that Lazarus would not have died if he had ar-

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Too often we use Bible passages and hymns because we are afraid to show the true feelings and the inadequacies of our thoughts. But there could well be more immediate comfort in the latter.

rived earlier. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26, Good News Bible). Perhaps that is the question we must ask ourselves. Do we believe that we will live even if we die?

Most of us want to live as long as possible, even though we have often made the statement, "I am prepared to die." Raymond Charles, a pastor for 42 years and past president of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities, says that he did not fully grasp the meaning of preparing for death until he was stricken with a rapidly spreading liver cancer. "I suddenly realized that what I wanted to do yet in life needed to be done promptly." At his anointing service he sensed God speaking to him: "If I lengthen your days, they are very precious; use them wisely." This is a good admonition for all of us, not only to those who are terminally ill.

A secondary issue of the dying process is helping those who are bereaved. I have often felt the need to pray, "Lord, loosen my tongue." How do we comfort those who are grieving? So often we struggle with the temptation to open our Bibles and quote a lot of Scriptures, such as Romans 8:28 (KJV): "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Or we sing songs at funerals such as "I Need No Mansions Here Below" and "Gathering Flowers for the Master's Bouquet." At times these may bring comfort and meet certain needs, but too often we use these passages and songs because we don't know how to comfort and let people know we care.

Raymond Charles, in reflecting on his ministry, says, "Today I would have fewer words and more feeling. I wouldn't mimic what the Bible says, I would reach out and touch."

The story is told of a little girl who lost a playmate in death. One day she told her family that she had gone next door to comfort the sorrowing mother. "What did you say?" she was asked. "Nothing," the child replied. "I climbed up on her lap and cried with her." This young girl had discovered how to reach out, touch and comfort.

Mary Kanagy, an intensive-care nurse at a local hospital, says, "After I had my mastectomy and then discovered that I had lung cancer, I received letters from some well-meaning friends implying that if my relationship with God would be right, I would not be suffering from a life-threatening illness." A mother whose 20-year-old daughter died of cancer says that when people made comments such as "She's better off now," "You will get over it" or "God knows what's best," she wanted to tell them she was so angry at God that she felt like choking him.

C. S. Lewis makes a keen observation in his book *A Grief Observed*. "Talk to me about the truths of religion and I'll gladly listen. Talk to me about the duty of religion and I'll listen submissively. But don't come talking to me about the consolations of religion or I shall suspect that you don't understand."

The time has come for us to bring this subject out of the closet and deal with it in a forthright manner and realize that we do not have to fear death. It truly is the joyful release from the limitations of the human body. We no longer need to be afraid to complete that simple but powerful prayer, ". . . If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take." •

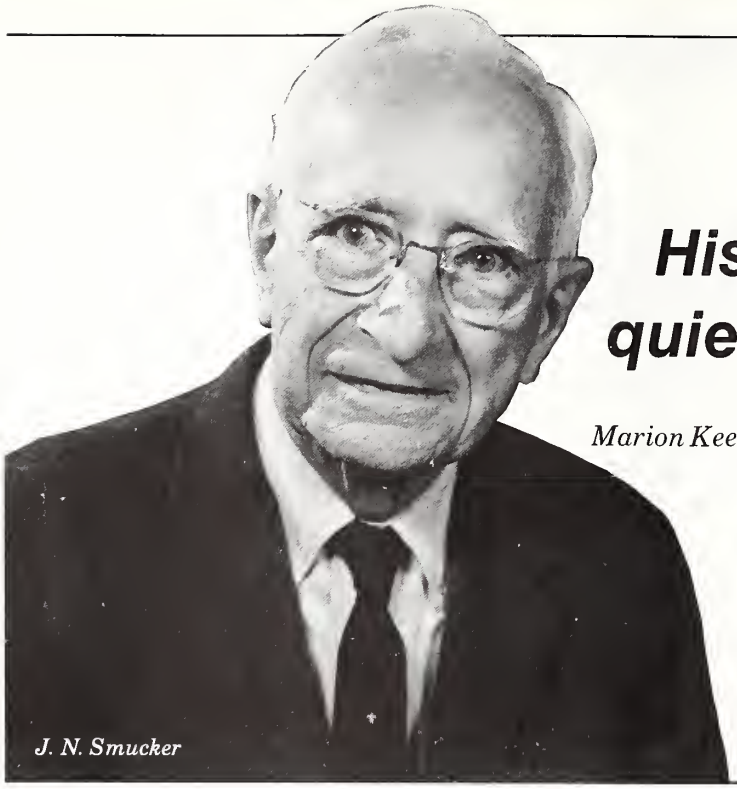
## Terminally ill

*Irene Ewert Wiebe*

Oh God!
it can't be true;
it's never been before
why should it be now?
It must be human error;
yes, tomorrow will be different.
Yet, slowly it devours
in silent approach.
Oh, why don't they take it away?
(frail technology!
feeble mind of man!)
Why doesn't it stare at them?
—those who waste their time,
or those with made-to-order days ahead.

Maybe—
maybe there's another chance,
if I try again,
harder
for you God?
But it just sits there
staring,
day after day,
never a break,
not even a blink;
mercilessly
penetrating the spirit
with fear.
Must I totally succumb
before my time?
Perhaps—
perhaps that would be easier
—to succumb.

Ah, its eyes are soft'ning some.
Engulfed in mist
all's becoming one.
Go—
leave me now,
take away your devices,
let peace and beauty flow;
safely
cradled in the arms
of one who went before
—the risen Lord.



J. N. Smucker

# His was a quiet way

*Marion Keeney Preheim*

"We remember him as a man of faith, a faith unshaken by the crises that can so easily upset us in our everyday experiences. He could take the long view of human destiny. He believed it more important to see what the years and the centuries say than what the hour may hold in terms of frustration, fear, suffering and disappointment." So wrote former Bethel College president David C. Wedel at the time of Jesse Norman Smucker's death. His comments were in a letter to the family from the Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., where Smucker served as pastor from 1936 to 1942.

After that pastorate Smucker was at another college-related church, the First Church of Bluffton, Ohio. J. Herbert Fretz, then a Bluffton student and now with Mennonite Biblical Seminary, wrote about Smucker, "I shall not forget his sermons during my college days, especially his chapel talks on the Lord's Prayer."

This happened during World War II. Mennonite men were in Civilian Public Service camps and a General Conference committee asked Smucker to also serve CPS workers with preaching tours.

J. N., as people called him, was elected as the GC president in 1945. H. A. Fast, who worked with J. N. Smucker on revising the GC constitution and is now retired, said recently, "He really showed good judgment, levelheadedness. And he was a marvelous friend with a sense of humor and wit."

Terminating as the Bluffton church's pastor, Smucker assumed editorship of *The Mennonite* in 1950 and served in that capacity until 1961. He was called to pastor the Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago in 1952. The church was closely connected with MBS. Later MBS president Erland Waltner wrote, "His wise support for the seminary in its transitions and his personal integrity made him one of the truly great individuals in the shaping of Mennonite Biblical Seminary."

Smucker coupled editing *The Mennonite* with his work at Woodlawn, and when he moved to Goshen, Ind., in 1955 he also taught at the seminary. After retirement as editor in 1961, he served as interim pastor at First Mennonite Church, Upland, Calif.

A book of Smucker's sermons, *Look to Your Faith*, was published in 1963 as a tribute to his gift of blending the spoken and the written word.

**His early years.** Smucker's character was shaped in the Smithville, Ohio, area. His family had no electricity, gas, telephone, automobile, refrigerator, piped-in-water, radio, television or rural mail delivery.

He went to a one-room elementary school and walked two miles to a three-year high school taught by one teacher. For his fourth year of high school he commuted five miles by horse and buggy.

He taught in a one-room school from 1911 to 1914, attended Goshen College from 1914 to 1918, and in 1916 he was ordained to the ministry. After college graduation he volunteered to serve in Armenia for the American Committee for Relief in the Near East (later called Near East Relief).

Following his voluntary service, Smucker made his way across the desert in a camel caravan and continued east on a boat to India. He went on to China, crossed the Pacific Ocean to Canada and then went home to Smithville.

Back home he became one of the unpaid ministers in Oak Grove Mennonite Church and a teacher for a two-room high school. Smucker had a unique preaching style which retired schoolteacher Anna R. Smucker well remembers. He gave short, to-the-point sermons so people did not get tired or sleepy, she said.

To stress being on time, she recalls that he had the adult Sunday school room door shut at the announced starting time.

He was patient and understanding, but he did not like gossip and the use of slang.

J. N. married Mary Lantz on May 9, 1922. They had four children: David, Leonard, Mary Ann and Joe. Jesse relied a lot on Mary for emotional support and for help with church work. While at Oak Grove, for example, she introduced the annual a cappella singing of "The Messiah."

Smucker alternated teaching school and pastoring with furthering his education. He spent one year at Princeton Seminary and later attended Hartford Theological Seminary.

He was a full-time minister at Oak Grove from 1931 to 1936. He then accepted the other posts of pastor and editor already noted.

In his retirement Smucker served several years as janitor of the Eighth Street Church in Goshen, Ind. He also did bookbinding, repairing periodicals and books for a library and bookstore. His hobbies included pottery making and woodworking.

The Smuckers moved to Greencroft, a retirement community in Goshen, in 1970. He died in 1983 at the age of 90.

People speak of J. N. Smucker as a quiet man. When he did speak, others listened because they knew he had something to say. They learned too that he was a highly disciplined yet caring person.

In his retirement, when asked by his family to write about himself, he wrote, "In looking back over the years of teaching and preaching and editing, it has been a good experience. There have been joys and sorrows as in all lives, but God has been very good to us."

# Are you in the cheating business?

*Calvin Redekop*

I came home late (12:30 a.m.) from the Toronto airport some time ago and gave the limo driver $30 (I thought) for a $24 fee and received the change. Just before hitting the hay, I checked my wallet and noticed I was $10 short.

The chagrin and embarrassment one feels is known by all with similar experiences. The most disconcerting aspect of such a debacle is the indecision. "Am I sure I am right?" "Would the driver believe me?" "Is the $10 really that important?"

After about 30 minutes of equivocating, I decided to call the dispatcher. The driver had just returned. I cautiously asked if I had given her $10 too much. She kindly said, "Let me check my evening take." After a few minutes she replied, "You are lucky and so am I. There is an extra $10 here and if you had not called I would not have known what I should do with it."

It has been said that a social system can only operate if there is honesty and trust in the society. If each person's actions need to be tested and verified, then a social system breaks down. This is even more true in the business world. It sometimes takes a long time for people to find out that "so and so is dishonest" or that "XYZ Company does not give you a fair deal." In the long run, the business will fail if cheating or dishonesty is practiced.

However, the real rub is that most of us are on occasion tempted to cheat. Many have resisted all tempting situations and have given honest trades, have kept our word, have dispatched our obligations, but some of us have at times yielded.

**Do Christians cheat?** Does being a Christian protect one from yielding to temptation? I know of no empirical evidence on this point, but I may not need any. I have friends who have learned to trust a Bible-thumping Christian businessman far less than a sane and reasonable atheist.

An old anecdote makes a point as it tells of a farmer who bought a horse from a Pennsylvania Quaker. The farmer had hardly gotten the horse home before he noticed that it limped badly and was much older than he had been told. Angrily the farmer returned. "I'll give you your money back," the Quaker replied quickly. "I don't want the money back," the angry farmer retorted, "I want your broad-brimmed hat so I can drive a bargain like you do."

*Cheating and dishonesty have a lot to do with self-image and with respect for other people.*

Do Christians cheat on income tax returns? Do they cheat in reporting sales taxes? Do Christian employers renege on wage agreements or wage payments? Do they not deliver what was agreed upon? Do they exchange cheaper goods for the ones agreed upon? I am afraid they sometimes do. If Christians also get bad reputations, cheating must not be a respecter of persons.

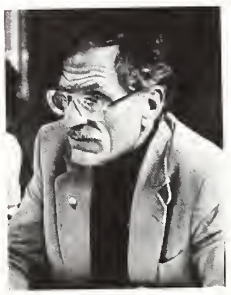
**Cheating is wrong.** Why do we do it? Usually for extenuating circumstances: (1) We are in a specially serious financial bind. (2) There is an unusually tempting situation which makes it almost impossible not to cheat. (3) We want to get even with our boss or a customer. (4) Simply because of our greed.

For the Christian, greed should not even be considered as a reason for cheating. The New Testament states clearly that the love of money is the root of all evils (1 Timothy 6:10). I don't know of any way to mistranslate or misinterpret that passage. Cheating to get even with someone is also not promoted in the Bible. Paul says in Romans 12:19, "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay,' says the Lord."

Cheating because you are in financial difficulty or because it is so easy brings us to the nub of why some among us might be tempted to cheat. How can we respond to this? Cheating because it is easy is most easily answered. Either as an employer or as an employee, it is our duty to remove the cause of temptation or to avoid tempting situations. Jesus taught us to pray, "And lead us not into temptation." And he himself prayed to the Father that he would not be tempted. Employers have a great responsibility to keep tempting situations from their employees, and employees have the same obligation in their dealings with customers, associates and friends.

But what about the most tempting reason for cheating, namely, desperate financial or material straits? If anyone, even a Christian, is in serious enough trouble, you can justify or rationalize almost anything. In such situations it behooves us as fellow Christians to support and surround such people. If we leave them alone, we are almost forcing them to succumb. How can I derive that position from the Bible? Because we are one another's keepers and what happens to each other is our responsibility. The Epistle to the Galatians says much about faith and life, and Paul concludes by saying, "If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit. Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another. . . . If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. . . . Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Cheating is not only an individual act; it is also a social act and involves us in helping others avoid temptation and restoring them if they fail. If Christians cheat as much as non-Christians, it may be that we do not believe in the social aspects of the causes and the necessity of deleting tempting situations.

I wonder what the limousine driver would have done with that $10 had I not called.



*Calvin Redekop is professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.*

# Some call him 'Mr. GC'

*Amy Rinner Dueckman*

He has chaired meetings of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and of the General Conference Mennonite Church, masterfully told and illustrated stories and sermons, directed choirs and served as a minister.

In his spare time he likes to play golf and volleyball, assemble model airplanes, participate in a men's chorus and relax by reading or listening to classical music.

He is Jacob Tilitzky, current president of the 65,000-member General Conference Mennonite Church and pastor of the 400-member Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church in Clearbrook, B.C.

Like many Canadian Mennonites, Tilitzky was born in Russia and migrated to Canada as a youngster in the 1920s. After eight years in Saskatchewan, in 1936 the family moved to British Columbia, where he has made his home ever since.

Growing up in a Christian home and having a minister for a father helped shape Tilitzky's desire to enter the ministry. "I came to the faith and to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ at age 21 and became part of the West Abbotsford (B.C.) Mennonite Church. There I was involved in youth work and in music work as choir director. Some people let me know in a kind way that perhaps music wasn't my thing and that I should rather be in something else, such as the ministry," he says, smiling. In 1956 came the young Jake's chance to move into the ministry, when he and three others from West Abbotsford Church were elected as ministers on a trial basis.

In 1957 he was ordained and in 1963 was called to be pastor of the Eben-Ezer Church, then an all-German-speaking congregation composed largely of people who had recently migrated from Paraguay. He served there 14 years until becoming conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, where he remained four years.

*Tilitzky was awarded a sombrero and named an 'honorary Hispanic' at Bethlehem '83.*

In 1982, however, Tilitzky felt a call to return to Eben-Ezer Church. In the pastoral ministry, he explains, "I can work face to face, shoulder to shoulder and heart to heart with people. Being with people in marriage, in death, as children are born and families grow, that whole gamut gives a perspective on life that I have found immensely rewarding."

The years Tilitzky spent as B.C. conference coordinator were enriching for him, enabling him to work closely with a variety of people and situations. He cited being part of the establishment of the Chinese Mennonite Church in Vancouver as one highlight of that time.

Now he finds that his contacts as General Conference president also expand his awareness and horizons. During travel to Africa, Europe and Latin America he has been convicted of the disparity between U.S./Canadian and Third World living standards.

"I've been to the Third World and seen the terrible poverty there, but one need only to go to our cities to see poverty," he adds. On a recent trip to Denver, for example, Tilitzky says he was struck by the poverty he saw where Mennonite Voluntary Service workers are living. "There are desperately hungry people here too," he noted.

Tilitzky's burden for those less fortunate is reflected in his own conscious attempt to live a simpler life. He and his wife, Erna, have lived in the same three-room house throughout their 30-year marriage. "We live in a simple home without a lot of conveniences that many people have. We don't have a television; we don't have a refrigerator; we don't have an indoor toilet. We get along very easily, but then there's just the two of us. We could have built a larger home but have deliberately chosen not to."

*Erna and Jake Tilitzky have lived in the same three-room home for 30 years.*

Tilitzky admits he has difficulty understanding people who close their eyes to poverty at home while taking expensive vacations to faraway places or who build large, elaborate homes, especially after their families are grown and gone. "I believe many overdo it," he says. But he is also quick to explain that he does not want to judge others' choice of lifestyle, saying a simpler lifestyle can also be a burden in some ways. "We must be careful not to get 'tied' to our little house. I want to be able to relate to people of different income levels."

One frustration for Tilitzky is trying to relate his experiences on the conference level to those back home. "I see what's happening in the total conference and these things feel good. Then I come back to my church and just don't feel

*Meetinghouse, the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ editors' group, decided to prepare a series of articles about people who represent our various denominations in a special way.* The Mennonite *recruited this feature on Jake Tilitzky as a special representative of the General Conference.*

*In future issues we will share articles about people who represent the other denominations and conferences.*

*Reader comments are invited.*

quite right; I'm at a different place than they are, though not saying that they're wrong and I'm right."

These days Jake Tilitzky tries to divide his time fairly between responsibilities at the Eben-Ezer Church and his role as General Conference leader. Though he is approaching retirement age, a glance at his schedule would not reveal any decrease in activities. Last year conference-related travel took him away from his home church 14 Sundays; in the summer of 1983, duties at the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and General Conference sessions again kept him on the road. The church "has been very kind," he says, in accommodating his need for frequent absences.

Tilitzky has now served one three-year term as president of the General Conference and was re-elected last summer for a second term. At the midway point of serving in this capacity, he reflects on what the General Conference Mennonite Church means to him, where it is going and what he hopes to help develop.

"I feel my personality is such that I can serve a fairly good priestly role in the church," he says. "We are a diversified group; we have at the edges the fundamentalists and the liberals, though most of us are somewhere in between. Trying to bridge the gaps is one of my objectives. I feel excited about work between Mennonite denominations, the feeling of closeness we had at Bethlehem '83."

Tilitzky does not feel that the General Conference and Mennonite Church are or should be moving rapidly to a complete merger in the foreseeable future, but he does say, "We should work together wherever we can, as in our mission work. We should together have inter-Mennonite mission centers in North America, Asia and Africa. I feel strongly led to global ministries and global missions. The days of paternalistic mission centers reaching from here to the other side of the world are over. Perhaps this will be the role of the Mennonite World Conference, which at this point is basically inspirational. Those gatherings could become a Mennonite mission base."

Tilitzky feels generally positive about the changes that have taken place during his years of active involvement with the General Conference. "I think we have taken a more positive, prophetic stance on peace and justice issues. I think the debate we had at Bethlehem was very positive, with many people having different views." Yet he sees dangers too. "I am a little afraid that we are too often drawn in by movements in our culture. We get on 'bandwagons' on some issues very easily and don't have our biblical mandate or biblical interpretations."

Tilitzky's dream in that area is to see a conference committee responsible for biblical interpretation. Congregations have struggled with interpretation by themselves or passed the responsibility to the GC General Board, which has much other administrative agenda to take care of, he says. He believes there is a strong possibility that such a committee could become reality in the future.

As a leader and spokesman for the General Conference Mennonite Church, Tilitzky is aware of the difficulty of trying to be a voice for everyone. Sometimes he has sensed that people feel he doesn't necessarily speak for them or, conversely, that they feel good about him personally but not about the rest of the conference. Of attempting to solve such dilemmas he says, "You have your own inner convictions; you don't want to be compromising. All in all, I try to be fair. It's sometimes difficult but sometimes a lot of fun."

The demands of two church positions ensure that Tilitzky is always busy, whether at home or away. He does regret that he doesn't have as much time as he'd like to continue his education and enrich himself personally. After retirement he hopes to go on preaching tours and attend more inspirational meetings. "I'd like to go now but I'm away so much already. Once I'm finished with the presidency, then I'll do those kinds of things. I'll have as much time as I need."

For now, however, Jake Tilitzky is satisfied that he is where God wants him to be, serving his own church and the entire conference in his characteristically quiet way. "I'm in leadership," he says simply. "This is what the Lord would have me do." *A Meetinghouse article*

*Amy Rinner Dueckman, 2215 Broadway, Clearbrook, BC V2T 3G4, is a freelance writer and a member of the Olivet Mennonite Church.*

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# CMC acts on publications in 'cautious advance'

Winnipeg—Whereas the 1983 Conference of Mennonites in Canada Council of Boards sessions a year ago reflected tensions throughout, this year's annual meetings were congenial and optimistic.

Having slightly surpassed 100 percent of budgeted income from member churches, the CMC also liquidated a $100,000 debt because of unspent budget items and some self-generated income above projections.

At the official opening of the Feb. 2-5 meetings, CMC chairman Jake Fransen used Isaiah 54:2 as a text. While the prophet's admonition to "enlarge the tents" grew out of a tense political situation, Fransen suggested the CMC had weathered some tough years and was ready to move ahead. Fiscal restraints, cautious staff additions and special communication attempts with churches (including "every congregation" visits in several provinces) has built confidence in the constituency, he said.

Fransen noted that the largest program expansions among CMC churches are at local and provincial levels, but giving to CMC also increased by 431 percent from 1971 to 1982. This is not a time to celebrate recklessly, Fransen said, "but I believe God is speaking Isaiah 54:2 to our churches."

Included in his celebrative remarks was an announcement that Larry Kehler, CMC general secretary, had accepted a second three-year term.

The note of optimistic but cautious advance was evident in every board. General Board plans to add staff for the Committee on Ministerial Leadership. Congregational Resources Board is expecting to engage staff in missions/evangelism and communications. Canadian Mennonite Bible College hopes to add a full-time residence director and fill its music staff vacancy.

These appointments are to take place within a $2,583,593 income budget for 1984, only 2.3 percent over the actual income for 1983. Hopefully slightly more than $1 million of that amount will be self-generated. Congregational giving is projected to increase by 8 percent, from $1,439,454 in 1983 to $1,554,610 in 1984.

*General secretary Kehler (left) with CRB secretary Margaret Ewert: time to 'break the impasse' on publications*

A further adjustment within that budget will be a new salary package for staff. It is to include more comprehensive benefits plus increases to offset the austerity increases of the last two years.

Possibly the most influential resolution made Feb. 2-4 was the CRB decision to put *Mennonite Reporter* into every CMC home in late 1984 for at least one year and to do even more CMC inserts than previously to promote CMC unity and identity. It was also decided to contact provincial conferences for their cooperative involvement in this project. In addition, a vision was expressed to share in promoting *The Mennonite* and *Der Bote* as "acceptable" CMC papers which serve different functions.

Resistance to this direction so soon after an earlier task force declared an impasse on the matter was seemingly diffused when Kehler said, "I believe we must do something to break the impasse. I'm personally committed to the General Conference, the provincial conferences and Mennonite Central Committee as much as I am to the CMC. We are one work. But the CMC needs a special vehicle to help us carry out our ministry."

The Native Ministries board has made some new plans to tutor native leadership candidates in hopes of providing more native leadership for the future. In what was believed to be a "first," the NM board and staff held one evening's meetings in Selkirk, Man., on the "turf" of a small native church. Several native people participated freely in this session.

The 1984 CMC sessions will be held at Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alta., July 5-10, on the theme "Seek Peace and Pursue It." Evangelical writer/activist Jim Wallis, editor of *Sojourners*, will be the featured speaker.
*Bernie Wiebe*

# FOMCIT expands ministries, will establish permanent offices

Hwalien, Taiwan (GCMC)—The 26th annual meeting of the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan (FOMCIT) was held in Hwalien Jan. 21-23. Forty delegates from 16 churches and the Mennonite Christian Hospital as well as 10 observers attended the conference. The delegates represented slightly more than 1,000 members.

"The conference approved in principle to find a permanent location for the FOMCIT offices and to establish departments of evangelism, education and social concerns," said Sheldon Sawatzky, Commission on Overseas Mission missionary to Taiwan. "Experts in each area will devote a portion of their time to head up each department. The executive committee will work out details."

The FOMCIT executive committee is composed of 11 members: three pastors, five laymen and three missionaries. One of the missionary representatives on the committee will be related to Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hwalien.

A year ago the FOMCIT executive proposed that the churches seek to become financially independent. They have established a "church development fund" which has been very successful. In one year, FOMCIT has reduced their budget asking from COM by 30 percent.

Sawatzky also reported that "the Tehun Church in Taipei was accepted into FOMCIT with formal membership privileges accorded after a one-year period. The church was begun independently several years ago and has 30 members with about 50 attending. The pastor is a FOMCIT-sponsored student at the Taiwan Theological College in Taipei.

Andrew Lu was elected chairman and will seek to guide the affairs of the conference for the next two years.

**A new religious order,** based on the example and discipline of medieval friars, is at work in the British Methodist Church. The order is called OASIS—for Order After Stephen in Service—and was formed by Peter Willis, who works in an inner-city church in Manchester. OASIS membership requirements include full-time service for one to five years, total obedience to the order's directions, willingness to work without pay wherever directed and readiness to follow a disciplined spiritual life through a course of religious study.

**Should the Christian gospel** shape my professional and vocational goals? was one of the questions focused for students during Mission and Service Week at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., Jan. 16-22. Activities included three luncheon discussions where representatives from Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Board of Missions shared opportunities and challenges for service, both from their agencies and from personal experience. One highlight of the week was a 12-hour prayer vigil which allowed students in ongoing half-hour periods to pray for personal concerns and the needs of the world.

# MCC renews commitment to food aid, agricultural development

Vancouver (MCC)—Responding to food emergency situations in Africa and renewing a commitment to work against hunger worldwide were actions taken by board members at the Mennonite Central Committee annual meeting.

The meetings were at the Peace Mennonite and Fraserview Mennonite Brethren Churches in Richmond, B.C., Jan. 27-28.

In a report on the Africa food situation, Africa staff said that many factors contribute to the current food crisis in that continent—military conflicts, world recession, political corruption, urbanization, increasing population, dependency on export crops and weather extremes.

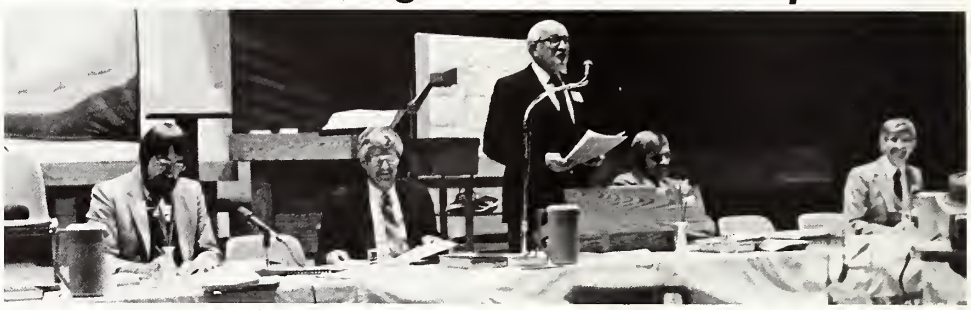
Where there are adequate food supplies, the poor often do not have access to that food, either due to economic restraints or because of wars. Many countries suffering food shortages, such as Chad, Angola and Mozambique, are embroiled in military conflicts that absorb economic resources and impede access to food.

The paper endorsed by the board states the need to maintain and strengthen MCC's current emphasis on both food aid and agricultural development and places both programs in the context of commitment to peacemaking.

Specifically the group proposes to appoint a special person in Africa to relate to food and peacemaking concerns throughout the continent, and to place three regional resource people—one in the Horn of Africa to give attention to refugee and food aid needs, one in Central Africa to focus on agricultural activities, and one in the Sahel to give emphasis on environmental concerns.

Emphasis will be on supporting agricultural programs of the churches and other agencies that are the local partners of MCC.

Board members described this as a 10-to 20-year commitment to food production in Africa. They noted the need for more agriculturists to serve with MCC to address hunger needs in Africa and in other continents.



*Robert Kreider (center) reviews the MCC workbook. Enjoying his presentation are (left to right) Larry Kehler, Elmer Neufeld, Reg Toews, Paul Peters.*

Africa was also specifically mentioned in a statement marking the 10th anniversary of the Resolution on the World Food Crisis—a document passed at the 1974 annual meeting in Hillsboro.

The 1974 resolution noted the growing food crisis and called for strengthened food-related programs and for lowered consumption in North America.

The new statement reaffirms that 1974 resolution, noting that "there are more homeless and hungry people in 1984 than in 1974." In addition to programs already under way the resolution says MCC will emphasize how governmental policies affect the food crisis, will implore governments to reverse the arms race, will encourage sharing material wealth to provide emergency food aid, will expand efforts to help the very poor and will develop ways to better correlate North American agriculture with problems of hunger and justice.

The largest amount of the board's time was spent hearing reports from the variour overseas departments.

The board approved a cash and material aid budget totaling $24 million for 1984—a $16.5 million cash budget and $7.5 million in anticipated material aid sent. The cash budget is up from the $14.8 million MCC spent in 1983. Constituency contributions will need to increase by just under 7 percent to reach that increased cash budget.

## Pastor required

June 1984

For more details contact:
**Sterling Mennonite Fellowship**
c/o Ted Schellenberg
27 Lake Grove Bay
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Phone (204) 269-9603 (evenings).

## Mechanic needed

**The Mennonite Church of Zaire** is requesting a mechanic experienced in gas and diesel engines. Some administrative ability is also desirable. The term of service is three years, including French language study.

For more information or to apply, contact:
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Commission on Overseas Mission
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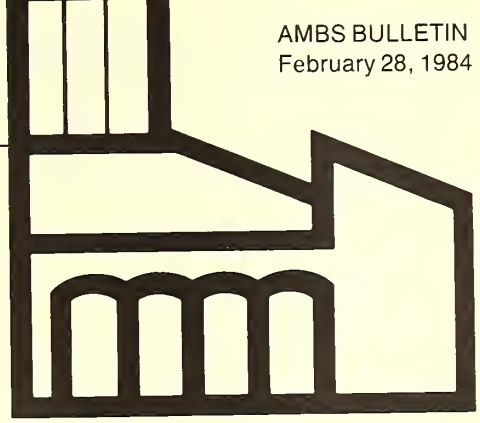

AMBS BULLETIN
February 28, 1984

# Seminary boards make faculty appointments

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., are working hard at building faculty. The task in the next two years involves replacement of retiring faculty and adding two teachers.

The trustees of Mennonite Biblical Seminary and the overseers of Goshen Biblical Seminary approved invitations at their winter session Jan. 18-20:

—Perry Yoder, associate professor of Old Testament, July 1, 1984;
—Marcus Smucker, assistant professor of pastoral theology, July 1, 1984;
—June Alliman Yoder, instructor of communication, half time, July 1, 1984;

The seminary boards are processing other invitations for faculty positions. These will be announced at a later time.

In faculty reappointments, MBS called Henry Poettcker to another three-year term as president. GBS called Marlin E. Miller to another three-year term as president and granted continuing employment to Willard Swartley. The board named Swartley professor of New Testament.

The boards reappointed Paul Roten to one year as head librarian. They created a new office of Information Services and appointed John Bender as director on approximately a half-time basis effective Aug. 1, 1984.

Since Canadian students face earning employment restrictions while at seminary, the MBS board took an action "that the administrative committee review again the special financial need of Canadian students and search for ways to alleviate these. . . ."

Both boards heard progress reports on the search for faculty in field education and preaching, and in evangelism and church planting. Nominations for both positions are still open.

The boards heard that bids for the student housing and nursery renovation project came in about $250,000 over the estimate of $1 million. The administrators are working at ways to make some cost cuts and also looking at ways to start the project with MBS funding the first phase and GBS the second.

*Howard Charles teaches 1 Corinthians during interterm.*

Both boards recognized that the administrative duties of their presidents were absorbing them full time, with teaching and writing responsibilities and expectations piled on top of that.

Board members took up the administrative overload discussion in joint session. Should AMBS have one president? Should the two administrations share a vice president? Is it time to talk about one seminary? Or another seminary joining the association? One member said, "I think it's time to look at the new picture" resulting from 25 years of association.

Thelma Groff and Marcus Smucker presented a progress report on "Spiritual Formation Concerns at AMBS" to the closing joint session. They noted successes and failures in various efforts to invite "everyone at AMBS to give attention to their personal spiritual formation as well as the formation of the Spirit in the community."

In a written report, Groff said of one group, "Some have spoken to an emptiness, some to discouragements and resentments, and some to fears. Whoever is able responds, and time after time people minister to each other. We experience repeatedly that God works as God wills and in a variety of ways."

Smucker reported, "The disciplines that we are pursuing here at seminary are simple and elementary. There is constant need for encouragement and support in the development of these disciplines because they seem to go counter to our materialistic and activistic culture. Our approach to spirituality provides significant resources for spiritual growth in the lives of the students, but the experience of these requires continual encouragement and accountability."

Groff and Smucker said they "are inclined to recommend that spirituality at AMBS requires the equivalent of a full-time faculty person." The two will bring a final report and recommendations to the boards at their May meeting culminating their two-year assignment as coordinators of spiritual formation at AMBS.

On Wednesday evening the boards participated in a testimonial dinner in honor of Jacob J. Enz on his 65th birthday.

# Mennonite Encyclopedia revision begins

Since it appeared nearly 30 years ago (1955-59), the four-volume *Mennonite Encyclopedia* has received widespread recognition as a remarkable reference work, especially in light of the relative smallness of its sponsoring Mennonite constituency. As such it is a tribute to the vision and perseverance of an entire generation of church leaders and scholars (including C. Henry Smith, Harold S. Bender, Cornelius Krahn) and to an adventure in inter-Mennonite cooperation. As is characteristic of encyclopedias, *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* reflected the state of existing knowledge and research on Anabaptist and Mennonite life and thought. Mennonite historical, theological and sociological research has grown in vigor and vitality in the intervening years.

After several years of consultation and planning, including the exploration of sources for funding, preliminary work on the expansion of *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* began in September 1983. One of the first tasks was to study the existing four-volume edition to determine its strengths and weaknesses. This work is being carried out by C. J. Dyck and Dennis Martin under the auspices of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, the research arm of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. The executive council of the institute, meeting at Elkhart, Jan. 27-28, gave approval for continued editorial planning.

Study of the original *Mennonite Encyclopedia* will proceed under two perspectives. Envisioned is either (a) a supplementary volume covering developments since 1955 together with a limited number of revised articles from the original encyclopedia or (b) a comprehensive multivolume new edition that would include revised articles from the first edition together with coverage of the developments of the past three decades. One of these options will be chosen in September 1984.

A survey of the contents of *The Mennonite Encyclopedia* reveals that approximately one-fourth of its space was allotted to biographies of Anabaptist, Mennonite and other church leaders. More than one-sixth of these biographies (4 percent of the total encyclopedia) recount the lives and deaths of Anabaptist martyrs. Another 20 percent of the four-volume work tells the story of Anabaptists and Mennonites in a large variety of countries, states, provinces, counties, towns and villages in Europe and the Americas. Information about other continents is limited, reflecting the state of world Mennonitism in the 1950s. Descriptions of books, hymnals, periodicals and their publishers fill approximately 4 percent of the encyclopedia.

In contrast, articles on theology and biblical studies (2 percent), missions and evangelism (1.5 percent), art and literature (.7 percent), church life and worship (3 percent), and war and peace (.7 percent) occupy a comparatively small portion of the work. Information about regions outside Europe and the United States is relatively limited or outdated. Articles on health services, ecology, justice, faith healing, bioethics, apologetics, private worship, spiritual life, civil disobedience, work ethic, humanism, grace, sin and the Sermon on the Mount are only a few of the topics not found in the first *Mennonite Encyclopedia*. New, corrected and modified interpretations of Anabaptist and Mennonite history, doctrine, church life and social patterns set forth during the last 30 years make the revision of many articles desirable.

Planning for the new encyclopedia or supplement will be assisted by microcomputer storage of essential information about each proposed encyclopedia article, making possible efficient evaluation, sorting and shuffling of article proposals. The possibility of storage in a larger computer data base system, permitting ongoing revision and non-print access through outside computers is not presently under active consideration. Word processing software for editing and typesetting of text is already in use in the institute offices under the supervision of Carol Martin. (Both Carol and Dennis Martin were formerly associated with production and editing of the soon-to-be-released *Brethren Encyclopedia*.)

It is hoped that a revised and augmented encyclopedia can eventually take its place alongside its predecessor, speaking to and for the Mennonite global village through descriptions and assessments of growing, changing and enduring Mennonite involvement in a variety of social, spiritual, political, economic, intellectual and artistic settings. *Dennis Martin*

*C. J. Dyck teaches Anabaptist Theology and History during interterm.*

*Lavon Welty teaches Christian Education of Youth during interterm.*

# News items

**Erland** and **Winifred Waltner** traveled to Recife, Brazil, in early January where they visited with their children, Dan and Rose Graber. On Jan. 8 Benjamin Daniel was born to Rose and Dan, giving joy to both the parents and the grandparents. On the return trip Erland spoke to missionaries (both MC and GC) who met at Palmeira, Parana, on Jan. 24-25. He led Bible studies on 1 Thessalonians and Titus.

**Gertrude Roten** spent the month of January in Newton, Kan., where she taught an extension course in the Great Plains Seminary Education Program. It was a study of the Gospel of John. Twenty students were enrolled.

**Willard Swartley** spent two weeks in Virginia and Pennsylvania during the interterm. During the week of Jan. 8-14 he conducted a spiritual renewal week at Eastern Mennonite College, with Bible expositions on the Gospel of Mark. The next week he served at Eastern Mennonite Seminary for the Ministers Week, with studies in 1 Corinthians. He met with ministers of the Eastern District Conference for a day to discuss his book *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women*. He also conducted a seminar in the Pittsburgh Mennonite Church on "Peacemaking in the Gospels."

**Jake W. Elias** held a week of meetings in the Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio, Jan. 8-13. During the mornings he led expositions on 1 Thessalonians. In the evenings he dealt with the Book of Acts.

**Gayle Gerber Koontz** participated in the Authority Consultation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Jan. 29-31.

# THE MENNONITE

## WM EDITION

WM

# window TO MISSION

JUNE - JULY 1984

# The open window

When I was a child I learned the hard way that I had a poor sense of smell. One day when my mother went out to work in the garden, she said, "Jeannie, I have beans cooking. Please add water if they get dry." I sat at the kitchen table reading and forgetting. Later, a very perturbed mother couldn't understand how I could sit only five feet away from beans scorching in the bottom of the kettle and not smell a thing!

In recent months I've become aware of odors and fragrances in another way. A friend who sings in our church choir has developed extreme reactions to various odors and fragrances. When others in the choir wear certain colognes or lotions, have just had a permanent on their hair, or use certain sprays or rinses to prevent static in clothing, her allergies go into action. She moves to a different seat or sometimes even has to leave the sanctuary in hopes of getting relief. We all empathize with her and want to help by identifying what she can't tolerate.

In 2 Corinthians 2:14 Paul tells us that we are a sweet smell, a pleasant fragrance of Christ. Not an allergy-causing fragrance. Not an odor of burning beans which I with a poor sense of smell cannot smell. But a wonderful, positive witness to our Lord's glory. This challenges me to live my life more totally for Christ in all I do.

—Jeannie Zehr

COVER

God uses us to make the knowledge about Christ spread everywhere like a sweet fragrance. For we are like a sweet-smelling incense offered by Christ to God, which spreads among those who are being saved and those who are being lost. 2 Corinthians 2:14b-15 (TEV)

WM

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# I BELIEVE in Women in Mission

Naomi Lehman

I believe in *Women in Mission*
10,000 strong
across two countries.

I believe in our purpose,
the goal of helping women become effectively involved
in the mission of the church.

I believe that women with a personal dedication to Christ
and a receiving of his power
will fulfill that purpose.

WHO ARE WE?

We are the Annas
sharing the good news of Jesus with others.

We are the Marthas
eager, aggressive,
but sometimes misunderstanding needs.

We are the Susannas and Johannas
providing for the work of the Lord
through our means.

Our name may be Lydia—the businesswoman
whose heart the Lord opened,
showing hospitality and generosity.

Are we the Rhodas
excited and thrilled,
yet forgetting to open the door?

We are the Phoebes,
leaders in our churches,
helping many in their pilgrimages of faith.

Priscilla is also our name,
teaching the fullness of the gospel as we lead our churches
into the total mission and ministry of the General Conference.

And then there is Dorcas—
how many of us bear that name?
sewing, helping those in need
through COM, CHM, MCC, or on a local level.

Our names may be Lois and Eunice,
grandmother and mother,
whose influence on young lives will bear fruit
as Timothy demonstrates.

We are women of the upper room,
constantly in prayer,
awaiting the power promised by our Lord.

We are the unnamed women on the day of Pentecost,
receiving the Holy Spirit
as foretold by the prophet Joel.

We are Women in Mission like our counterparts in Scripture;
we serve with vigor and enthusiasm,
with courtesy and kindness,
with love and compassion,
making Christ known throughout the world.

## CONSIDER READING

WHO WAS THE FIRST woman graduate of Bethel College? Who was the first woman elected to the General Conference Board of Missions, now COM? Of the first four missionaries to Colombia, South America, three were women. Who were they? What Mennonite midwife could carry a three-bushel sack of potatoes under each arm in the 1700s?

You may not know the answers to the above questions, or probably never even wondered about them, but *The Mennonite Women's Calendar 1984-1986* has provided me with hours of delightful reading. It is designed much like a calendar, but one can not stop with reading just one day's tidbits of information about the many "firsts" for women in church leadership, mission, education, and women's organizations. Also included are women with special gifts in the arts, in writing, in leadership, as well as ordinary women who have made ordinary contributions in ordinary ways.

I have enjoyed the calendar so much that I have given several as gifts. We keep one with our daily devotional materials and share the tidbits as a family.

The calendars are available in various Mennonite bookstores, or you may send $3.50 plus 75¢ postage to Dorothy Yoder Nyce, WOMENSAGE Representative, 1603 South 15th Street, Goshen, IN 46526.

## More about . . .

# Praying for Peace

Lois Schrag

The following prayer suggestions focus on the work of the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section. Your Peace Covenant Prayer Group might choose to incorporate them into your prayers.

We pray:

1) That we be freed of our fear of the Russians/Communists so that we can respond to the arms race by honestly praying for our "enemies."
2) That in thankfulness we recognize the role that MCC has played in dealing with the Selective Service System regarding alternative service in the event of a draft.
3) That Jim Amstutz and others involved with draft issues be given continued wisdom and discernment.
4) That our hearts and minds be open to the Holy Spirit concerning the payment of war taxes.
5) That God will grant us compassion and direction as discussion of the death penalty heats up again.
6) For the work of MCC in Central America and for those churches involved in providing sanctuary for refugees.
7) For those courageous Christians who are seeking to be reconcilors in the Middle East.
8) For Ron Kraybill and his work with Mennonite Conciliation Services.
9) For Delton Franz and the MCC Washington, D.C., Office and their witness in the political arena.
10) That the church will stand ready to use the gifts women offer to kingdom-work.

**Women in Search of Mission**

by Gladys Goering

A history of our General Conference Mennonite Women's Organization.

**Now one-half price—**
**$1.98**

Add 75¢ shipping when ordering.
**Faith and Life Press,**
**Box 347,**
**Newton, KS 67114**

# THE CO CONNECTION

*After missionary service in Japan for fifteen years, Belva and Verney Unruh were reassigned to Taiwan in 1979. Belva studies the Mandarin language part-time, assists Verney in pastoral work—in visitation, with women's groups, Sunday school, and youth—at Fu-An church. She also works at the Yuli Clinic one day a week.*

IN ADDITION TO the physical needs of the people coming to the Yuli clinic here in Taiwan, we are discovering more and more needs which are a direct result of the socioeconomic situation.

Lack of money is a very common problem. Most patients are farmers who raise a good portion of the food that they need, but have little cash income. When extra needs, such as medical care, arise, they simply don't have the money to see a doctor. The Social Service Department of the hospital is able to offer some help.

As more and more of the younger generation leave to work and study in the cities, the traditional family support system is broken down. The result is that some elderly people are experiencing great needs. They need material aid, some supervision in their daily living, but most of all they need to know that someone cares for them and that they are still worthwhile persons.

I have been seeing such an elderly couple. The woman is being treated for tuberculosis. Since she is approaching senility she needs careful supervision in properly taking her medications.

The first time she returned for a refill, she had already used a month's supply in two weeks! We then gave her a two-weeks supply, carefully dividing out daily doses and explaining how it was to be taken. Her husband came with her the next time and reported that he had taken some of the medicine for his headaches!

Again the nurses carefully explained in tribal language how the medication must be taken. Since he is a bit more alert than she is, we think the medication process is going better now.

We have been able to help some with their other needs too by giving them some much needed used clothing and rice at Christmastime.

Even amidst poverty the idea of giving a gift in return is not forgotten. They came to the clinic with the gift of a live chicken for me. I didn't need the chicken as much as they did, but I could not deny them the satisfaction of also being able to give.

Perhaps the most important thing we have done for the couple is to show them that we care. She recently arrived at the clinic seemingly discouraged and depressed. She was also barefooted.

Although it is not as cold here as in many parts of North America, it isn't exactly barefoot weather either. My heart ached for her. I went out and bought her a pair of shoes.

I pray that the Lord will bless this as a cup of cold water given in Jesus' name, and that God will give those of us who work with these tribal people understanding, patience, and a loving concern for their total well-being. I pray that we may willingly and gladly be used to the glory of God in whatever task comes our way.

# PROGRAM 6 WE ARE THE FRAGRANCE

Gladys Goering

PICTURE A BIG, old-fashioned lilac bush in bloom beside the back door. Or wild roses along the roadside. Crushed mint leaves. Cinnamon bark. Bread baking. Autumn bonfires.

Fragrance.

Have you ever played a game where you kept your eyes closed as different items were given to you to identify by scent only? Some pungent smells are easily named. Others, more subtle, are not as obvious, but each in turn identifies its source.

You are the fragrance of Christ, wrote Paul to the Corinthians. What a heartwarming description of followers of Christ. There is affirmation of the beauty of each individual whose desire is to reflect her God.

You are salt, a preservative and seasoning that is needed. You are light to do away with darkness and to give direction. You are disciples, learners. You are vessels to be used by God. You are crossbearers. You are witnesses.

All these familiar utilitarian descriptions point out a specific quality. There are tasks to do and lessons to be learned. God needs the person who is willing to be useful. We speak frequently about our roles in life. These categories help one identify specific roles and skills. God needs workers to represent the solid qualities named.

What more is called for in 2 Corinthians 2:14? "But to God be the thanks who in Christ ever leads us in His triumphal procession, displaying everywhere through us the sweetness of the knowledge of Him. For we are a fragrance of Christ" (Weymouth).

**To be**

One sure directive of these verses is that Christians are *to be* fragrance. There must be within us that relationship with our Lord which will show through everything we do. Someone has said that when Mother Teresa of India, who was recently awarded the Nobel Prize for humanitarian service, enters a room it is as though someone has turned on a bright light. The inherent goodness and devotion of this loving person shows in her presence alone. Her work with India's dying poor, which has won her recognition in both secular and religious communities, is not the result of an assigned job. It is the visible glow of the compassion of Christ within her.

There is no reason for false pride in the knowledge that we are the fragrance of Christ. There is even less excuse for false humility. The author of familiar words of an old hymn which bemoaned "such a worm as I" must have missed the loving endorsement in the verses being studied here.

The Living Bible speaks of the fragrance of Christ within us. We are a manifestation of that fragrance, not its origin. This is a very humbling thought that Christ is seen in and through us. We will show by our actions, of course, that we are followers of Christ. Even

before we act there should be within us that close bond with God which enables us to be fragrance.

E. Stanley Jones called for Christians to be harmonized within. One who is pulled every which way can be of no help to herself, much less to others. The inner beauty of a Mother Teresa comes from one at peace with herself and sure of her relationship with God. Fragrance is first of all within.

**To be available**

A second facet in reflecting fragrance is to *be available*. Have you ever been frustrated by a jar that can't be opened, or by a glue container lid that sticks? Although the contents are in plain sight, they are not available.

Sometimes it is one's reluctance to venture forth that keeps the fragrance bottled up.

J. B. Phillips talks about "bosom-flyers" who fly away to find security rather than reaching out and away from themselves. It is true that you make yourself vulnerable when you choose to be available to others. No one likes criticism, even a hint of disapproval. Yet life is not lived in a vacuum. It is only in interrelating with others that a fuller life is possible.

We've often read about two outgoing persons whose home was open to guests. Mary and Martha of Bethany shared their home with others. Jesus went there because he knew there was comfort and a warm welcome whenever he dropped in.

In the familiar account of one visit, it was Mary who made herself available to listen and to learn from their beloved friend. One can assume Martha was no less interested in Jesus' teaching, but at least on this occasion she put a needed task ahead of sitting at the place of learning. It was Mary's making herself available to listen that was the good choice, Jesus gently pointed out.

Perhaps in our day the greatest thief of availability is *time*. People's lives are so crowded and cluttered with worthwhile projects and good activities that the most frequently used excuse is lack of time. For most it is not a question of bad activities versus good, but determining what is the better choice. Like Martha, one frequently makes a poor assessment. What sort of fragrance is the harried, hurried, tired person?

From Mary and Martha comes also the lesson of hospitality, the availability for all in our homes to be the fragrance of Christ. One Sunday morning as a young couple stepped into our church, an older woman in the congregation came to them and invited them to their home for the noon meal. "I fixed extra food this morning and told Dan we'd invite somebody over for lunch," she said. The young couple accepted and the friendliness of the visit was refreshing to hosts and guests.

Paul, the weary traveler, appears to have been very conscious of the worth of hospitality. Where the pioneers always had an extra bed or food for both invited and unexpected guests, present generations seem to have lost much of that. In today's hectic pace, home becomes only a private shelter. Worthwhile and necessary as that is, what fragrance is unshared when one's home is unavailable to others? Take a look at your home or apartment. Is a fragrant welcome apparent?

**To be doing**

If one needs *to be* fragrance, and then make oneself to *be available* for sharing, does this mean that *doing* is not needed to reflect Christ? Hardly.

In the Goodspeed translation of the Corinthian verses, Paul says that God is using him as a censer-bearer to spread the knowledge of Christ. He asks, "Who is qualified for this task? I am!" There is joyous acceptance of his task to do his best.

In several versions of these verses the translators used exclamation marks indicating enthusiasm and pleasure.

Spontaneous gratitude and joy should characterize fragrance-givers.

Helen Good Brenneman, resident in a nursing home, wrote an article entitled "Gift of Love." She said of herself, "As a resident who can get around in a wheelchair, I try to pass on love to others."

"Job's miserable comforters" was the name she gave those who handed out unneeded advice, but she reminded her readers that persons do need your presence. Many homebound individuals want you to sit where they sit and share the monotony of their days, she added.

"Part of this has come from friends who have visited regularly, reading to me, praying with me, and just lifting my morale with a good chat. I think of someone who recently shared a good joke, one which brought chuckles for weeks and was worth passing on to friends." She advises her readers to share their wit and the warmth of their love.

On an office desk there was a little sheet an appreciative manager had clipped from a catalog. It read, "Do good and leave quietly." What a cheerful thought!

We are a church that has always stressed the value of service. We have agreed that faith without works is a denial of faith. Our mission outreach, although strongly evangelistic, has focused on the whole person and the need of addressing all areas of living. We can therefore also believe that the fragrance of Christ must be spread in doing as well as being.

In a recent article in *The Marketplace*, John H. Rudy wrote, "Full-time Christian service has often meant that a person must become a pastor, missionary, or an employee of a church institution.

"Isn't business an appropriate arena for full-time Christian service?

"The New Testament makes no provision for compartmentalizing our lives into church and business, sacred and secular, holy and profane, Sunday morning and Monday morning. In Christ secular business becomes sacred.

"As followers of Jesus in business we are called to be vehicles of the presence of God. To live the life of Jesus. To be different and extraordinary in the daily grind. To be visual aids of faithfulness. To be living epistles," stated Rudy.

Rudy was promoting the idea that the business world is as surely an arena for full-time Christian service as is the ministry or the mission field. What he has said applies to any job, any position, whether at home or away from home. Christ is not only reflected in those jobs we have labeled as religious.

Every God-given talent can display "everywhere through us the sweetness of the knowledge of him." Rudy's "to be different and extraordinary in the daily grind" is the challenge in a nutshell.

Much credit is given to those who are part of voluntary service programs. No one can count the good done by our church-sponsored service programs. Nor could one tabulate the personal growth which has resulted in years of dedication.

Another kind of volunteer less often praised is the at-home volunteer whose talents keep church and community vibrant. His or her name rarely appears in the columns of conference papers as "workers," or in hometown newspapers as living stones of community endeavor. Yet life in most of our churches and communities would come to a stumbling halt if every service rendered them would have to be paid for in dollars per hour.

A personal project for each one of us should be to express our thanks to those who have touched our lives by talent shared. Make a phone call. Write a note. Hug someone. Put an arm around someone and express your gratitude.

**To be thankful**

This year's study has been built around living stones. This final one emphasizes that each of us is used by God to reflect the fragrance of One whose name we bear.

"But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere" (RSV).

## PROGRAM "HOW-TO" IDEAS

1. Read 2 Corinthians 2:14, 15 in as many versions as possible. It might be advisable to ask several persons in advance to bring different Bibles. Have your group discuss which wording means most to them.

2. Give each person a small sheet of paper and ask her to list the things she has done "for free" for someone in the past month. List approximate time given. If your people are open to sharing, have them hand in their sheets (unsigned) and read them aloud. If you do not wish an oral sharing, this written assignment can serve as self-affirmation, or a nudge to do more.

A further suggestion might be to have members keep track of their volunteer hours for the following month, and at the next meeting rejoice together about the good that has been done.

3. Tell of specific people whose "fragrance of Christ" has blessed you.

4. Sing the chorus "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me."

5. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your congregation as fragrance-bearers. List the various tasks done on a weekly nonpaid basis. How many hours? At what age are your children and young people asked to contribute to church endeavors?

6. In this year of Mennonite World Conference, think about ways to become more aware of our sisters and brothers in our worldwide church. How can we become better support groups?

7. Look at the community in which you live. What is happening right now which needs the Christian's insight? Use your newspaper to express an opinion.

8. For your devotions use the one provided for Program 6 available in the 1983-84 Devotional/Resource Packet. Order the packet from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for $2.

# slice of life

**Jeannie Zehr**

"URRR! Men drivers!" she growls as she pounds the steering wheel with her fist. The man-driven auto pulls into our lane and buzzes ahead.

After hearing her brother, and my son, growl about "women drivers," often just to annoy his mom and sister, we have developed our own female response. We acknowledge every male mistake and disrespect on the road with a familiar growl.

Several women are talking about the evening meeting to which we are going. One comments, "My husband never puts the kids to bed when I'm gone. I come home and there they are." Another responds, "That's men!"

I am sitting with other women talking about having the flu. One states, "Boy, when my husband gets sick he's like a little boy—demanding and wiped out." Another responds, "That's men!"

"My husband never helps around the house." Another responds, "That's men, they just don't know how."

Often I interject, "Not all men. My husband . . ." or, "My niece's husband. . ."

Lord, forgive us for not letting people be the individuals you created. Forgive our generalizing prejudices and the boxes some of us females often put around men—boxes we have resented when they have been placed around us.

Thank you for loving each of us, boxes and all.

# A WOMAN IN MISSION:

## Amanda Friesen

**Helen Friesen**

THE SOULS of certain Christians draw others by the winsome fragrance they exude. Some demonstrate that living in the image of God can be done under very trying circumstances. Here are a few "fragrances" others caught from Amanda Friesen.

Her "essence of faith" did not waver when she developed rheumatoid arthritis in her thirties. She lived with this condition for over forty years.

All who knew Amanda knew her to be an unusual person. Some only know her through the poetry written with her twisted fingers.

Her immobilized body didn't cripple her spirit or faith in God. With the help of her husband, Jacob, she continued to make a home for him and their three children.

When a son died at the age of fifteen and a daughter died as an infant, Amanda's faith and courageous spirit served as a spark plug for her family.

She enjoyed company. Some came to cheer her, but found they were cheered. Her "essence of joy" and her upbeat outlook attracted visitors.

Her "essence of humor" found outlet in some of her poetry. Some 300 poems were published. Using money given in her memory helped her family to print a book of about 400 of her poems. The book is entitled *Verse from Twisted Fingers*.

Include "essence of love"—for her family, children, and others. As a handicapped mother she used unique and creative means to help family life run smoothly. Instead of going outdoors to check on her children, she blew a whistle. When a child heard his code blown, he came to her side with a cry of "Coming, Mother."

Her winsome manner and warmth of gratitude for her children's helpful deeds made the completion of the usual home routines easier.

Because she loved children, she taught a children's Sunday school class in her home for a time.

With "essence of prayer" she surrounded her family and close friends. She had lots of time to pray while lying on her back a major portion of each day.

Her telephone helped her with her "essence of encouragement." She felt for the numbers on the dial. Many persons received her encouraging calls. She shared in their problems and prayed for their requests.

Prism glasses enabled Amanda to write and read what was on her lap. She wrote many friends an encouraging

word from God's word, and shared how a Bible verse spoke to her.

Her encouragement helped her son, Phil, his wife, Kim, and two children go to Taiwan as missionaries. She kept in touch through letters, phone calls, and tapes.

Her "essence of independence" did not fail her. Even though she had to accept a certain amount of help from others, she could stand in an upright position. Thus she was able to wash dishes and prepare part of some meals.

Being unable to bend for about forty years, she learned ingenious ways of solving problems. Things on the floor might as well have been in China.

Once when preparing a meal for her family who would soon arrive home from church, she dropped a package of frozen fish on the floor. Unable to bend, she used a dustpan with a long handle, swept the fish on to it, opened the package, and prepared it.

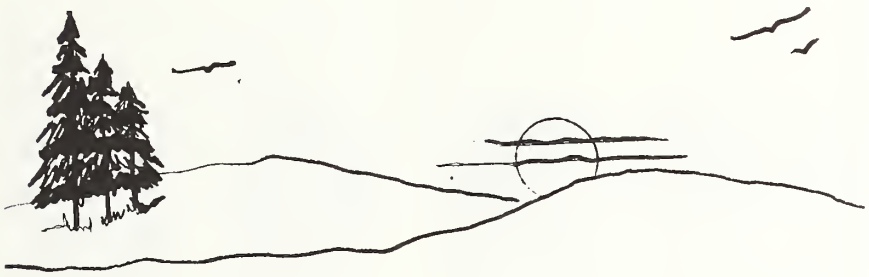
Her "essence of patience" helped when she had to wait for her husband to do things she couldn't do for herself. An inventor of sorts, he devised a bed which used electric power to turn a gear causing the bed to move from a horizontal to a vertical position. From the upright position she inched her way off the platform of the bed to get around her home on crutches.

Her "essence of talent" kept her writing. With those gnarled fingers she wrote special verses for special occasions.

With her musical ability she could tell her children (even while she was in bed) which keys on the piano they were playing wrong.

Her handicap did not defeat her. She told one niece, "God chose you to run around, so run around for God. He chose me for this."

Although a native South Dakotan, she spent her final years in Mountain Lake, Minnesota.



# A New Day Is Born

A new day is born innocent, craving love.
Some are awed by its mystery. . .
Some by the joy of it.
Birds herald it. . .breezes fondle it.
Warm sunlight bathes it,
And a roseate sky hovers over it,
Some acknowledge it. . .as a Gift of God.

—Amanda Friesen

# WM office jottings from Joan

Another March WM council meeting has come and gone. Some thirty representatives from Canada and the United States spent several days in Newton, Kansas, reviewing past accomplishments and planning for the future. Efforts for the '83-86 triennium were discussed. Relating to the hurting and lonely, working and praying for peace, and developing women's gifts were singled out as priorities. It was decided that visits by the executive and staff to each district and province once during the next three years would take place.

Council members participated in an excellent workshop on Parenting for Peace and Justice, given by Gloria Miller and her daughter Kim Luke from South Dakota.

It was also a time of paying tribute to Lora Oyer, who for seven years capably served as president; of welcoming Elsie Flaming as the new president beginning in April; of celebrating *Window to Mission*'s tenth birthday, complete with cake and candles.

Some difficult financial decisions also had to be made. Could the council count on WM groups to increase the budget by 7 percent? Would the $15,000 budgeted for hiring a much needed conference children's education worker (a challenge proposed to WM by the Commission on Education) be too difficult to attain?

A few days after everyone had returned to their respective communities in Washington, Pennsylvania, British Columbia, Ontario, and points in between, I began feeling the responsibility of converting decisions into actions. Reaching our financial goals, especially in the area of a worker for children (since this was a new project) seemed suddenly overwhelming. From where would the additional money come, since most groups would probably not be prone to increase giving substantially, and larger gifts from individuals were nonexistent?

The words "watch and pray" had been reiterated several times at our council meetings and I knew that we were bound together in our efforts of prayer.

Within a month of the council meetings, two elderly women wrote letters with checks enclosed, stating that they each had a desire to distribute some of their assets now rather than at the time of their deaths. Both gifts were substantial in amount and both were undesignated! I knew that this incident transcended coincidence.

**********

To those groups whose giving schedule still includes the travel fund for Third World women's travel to Mennonite World Conference: $3,000 was budgeted for this project. Receipts have exceeded this abundantly, therefore, it is suggested that your gifts for this fund be reallocated for Women's World Outreach, which will be used for educational opportunities for women overseas.

## contributors

**Kenneth Rupp** (cover photo) co-pastors the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church at Goessel, Kansas, with his wife, Anne. They are the parents of one son. Ken enjoys working with photography.

**Naomi Lehman** (I Believe in Women in Mission) and her husband make their home in Berne, Indiana. Naomi served from 1970 to 1977 as General Conference Women in Mission president. Prior to that she served six years as Central District WM District Advisor. She edits the First Mennonite Church newsletter, *Update*, which comes out twice a month.

**Lois Schrag** (More About Praying for Peace) lives near Kingman, Kansas, and is our Women in Mission representative on the General Conference Peace and Justice Reference Council. She is deeply interested in the whole area of Parenting for Peace and Justice.

**Gladys Goering** (Program 6: We Are the Fragrance) and her husband, Elmer, live in Moundridge, Kansas. Her interesting assignment is to represent the General Conference in Strasbourg, France, this summer at the Mennonite World Conference.

Gladys served as General Conference Women in Mission coordinator from 1973 to 1977. Her life has been one of active volunteerism.

**Jeannie Zehr** (Slice of Life, Consider Reading) edits *Window to Mission* from her home at 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815. She and her husband, Marv, are the parents of two children. Jeannie also works part-time as director of Maplewood Nursery School.

**Helen Friesen** (A Woman in Mission: Amanda Friesen) is an active member of the Bethel Mennonite Church, Mountain Lake, Minnesota, where she serves as one of the church organists. She also gives organ and piano lessons. She is District Advisor for the Northern District Women in Mission.

**Joan Wiebe** (WM Office Jottings) is our General Conference Women in Mission coordinator working out of 722 Main, Newton, Kansas. She is actively involved in the Faith Mennonite Church where her husband, Leonard, is pastor. They are the parents of three children.

## credits

COVER PHOTO: Kenneth Rupp.

QUOTATIONS: Pages 7-10, by Helen Good Brenneman, used with permission from *Sharing*, Winter 1984. Published by Mennonite Mutual Aid Association, Goshen, Indiana.

**Naomi Lehman**

**Gladys Goering**

**Jeannie Zehr**

**Helen Friesen**

## forecast

The August-September issue will introduce the 1984-85 program theme for Women in Mission and will share the titles for the six program-lessons which will be featured in the magazine for use in your group.

Printed in U.S.A.

# bright ideas

"CENTRAL AMERICA: A Second Look," is a new packet which includes country-by-country sketches, an update on the Central American refugee situation and a report on Mennonite Central Committee work in the region. The packet is available from MCC, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501, or MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2C8.

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A slide set titled, "Hear Us: Voices from Central America," is also available from MCC in the United States and in Canada. The slide set examines the Central American situation from the perspective of a Guatemalan Indian farmer and a Salvadoran refugee now living in Honduras.

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During a recent visit to Newton, Kansas, the editor spent a little time in both Faith Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church. It was exciting to find on the literature racks of both churches the program booklets for the local women's groups. The exciting part of the discovery was to see the covers of the books sporting the Women in Mission program theme and sketch for the 1983-84 program year.

One group had made their covers using a copy machine. The other group had transferred the program sketch on to a stencil to reproduce the covers.

Such use of our program theme and sketch ties women across North America closer together in a bond of common study and interest. The next issue of *Window to Mission* will introduce the 1984-85 program theme. Watch for it. Save it for your own group's program planning.

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"All You Ever Wanted to Know About Women in Mission" is a program idea that various districts and groups have been using in recent months. Have a panel of "experts" composed of several women who are willing to study your copy of the new *WM Manual*, past issues of *Window to Mission* (especially the pages titled, "WM Office Jottings), and other WM materials. Or if you have any General Conference WM executive members in your area, or your district or provincial officers, invite them to serve as your resource.

Try to be creative in the kinds of questions asked. Add some spice and humor.

Have you ever thought of having a plant-start exchange at one of your WM meetings? Another idea would be to invite everyone to bring a plant-start or small plant to donate to the area MCC SELFHELP shop.

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Do you have ideas to share with other WM groups? Send them to the editor, Jeannie Zehr, 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

# Seminaries recognize retiring teacher Jacob J. Enz

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—When Jacob J. Enz became a pastor in 1944, "it was almost unbelievable how the uncertainties concerning my vocation vanished in thin air," the pastor-become-teacher said in a recent interview.

In a testimonial dinner on Jan. 18, the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries recognized Enz, who is now moving to semiretirement from the classroom.

In the low, bass and majestic intonations of Peter Ikach's arrangement of the hymn "To Thee We Sing," from the liturgy of the Russian Church, a seminary ensemble directed by Karen Moshier Shenk opened a dinner attended by 120.

Enz was married in 1944 to Joan Veston. They have two sons, David and John, and three grandchildren. As a musician, Joan has distinguished herself in piano, organ, voice and choir directing. She continues to teach private music students and has served as organist and choir director in a number of churches. Jake has sung in numerous choirs.

In the after-dinner tributes, Darrell Fast, chairman of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary board of trustees said, "Even now when I prepare a sermon I go back to the tried and true lessons you taught in the inductive method of Bible study." He expressed appreciation for Jake's imparting a love of the Psalms.

Student Mark Fretz spoke of Jake as a friendly, informal and encouraging person "who is a scholar, a friend and a man of conviction."

Teaching colleague C. J. Dyck spoke to Jake's "care and diligence in lesson preparation," his "wide-ranging knowledge in the biblical field" and his "generous sharing in being a brother and counselor."

Marlin E. Miller, president of Goshen Biblical Seminary, said Jake's "pastoral spirit" has touched many students, his sensitivity ranging "from humorous to caring affection and love," his biblical scholarship and his "adamant insistence that AMBS remain biblical."

Herbert Fretz, MBS director of church relations, read a number of written greetings from family and friends.

In response Jake began, "I'm here because of Joan's perseverance and belief in me." He said that even though it is more blessed to give, "I have received so much from so many of you."

MBS president Henry Poettcker, master of ceremonies, invited Bertha Harder to make a presentation to Joan Enz. "Your love for beauty, music being at the heart of your life, . . . makes this a gift just for you," Bertha said. (It was a pendant in the form of a treble clef.)

Henry Poettcker presented Jake with a set of the *Hermeneia* Commentaries and a collection of more than 100 letters from students over the past 25 years. "Trust and confidence possessing in our heavenly father's blessing," the ensemble sang in closing with Konradin Kreutzer's "Song at Evening."

*Henry Poettcker (right) presents Jake Enz with the volume containing 100 letters from former students.*

Enz graduated from Bethel College (North Newton, Kan.) in 1941 and from Biblical Seminaries in New York in 1944. His father would have liked to see him follow in the family business in North Newton; however, he early felt a call to attend seminary, though throughout these studies he was not certain whether he would become a pastor or a missionary. He recalls the words of two of his mentors: "The call of God is found in the line of duty," and, "The water of the Jordan did not part until the priests put their foot in the water."

Enz began his teaching career in 1947 as instructor at Goshen (Ind.) College in elementary German. He then taught Bible and Christian education at Bethel College. In 1954 he was called to become the first full-time professor of Old Testament at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, then located in Chicago.

From 1948-50 he edited *The Mennonite*. He graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a doctorate in Semitics in 1960. His dissertation spanned both the biblical and the intertestamental literatures.

From his seminary training in New York the pastor-teacher-missionary has maintained a sense of mission about inductive Bible study. "That has been the central passion of all my teaching," he said.

The inductive approach, which deals first with the biblical text itself, "did not mean commentaries were off limits to us," he said. "But we were taught the procedures used by the commentary writers so we could indeed enter dialogue with the people who wrote the commentaries and thus bring an independent approach to the material," he said. "Any book related to the Bible must be read like one eats chicken—you eat the meat and leave the bone."

The Scriptures, Old and New, have become a place of continuous dialogue for Enz, the New Testament representing "a highly abbreviated shorthand for which one needs a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament for its proper understanding."

Part of his own living with the Scriptures has brought about "what some people might call a charismatic experience," an experience that encompasses spiritual as well as physical and emotional health, he said. The stress of teaching and completing graduate studies over 10 years after 3½ years of residence at Johns Hopkins, he said, led to continuing emotional ups and downs and a tremor.

Through medical care and involvement in a youth prayer meeting to which he had been invited while at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., problems that had existed for a number of years disappeared. They went away the day after he returned home.

Enz speaks warmly of the ministry of people in his life, pointing to its effect in making him a person who is ready to speak up for both "social justice and the resurrection." He sees himself as having moved from an ecumenical to an evangelical point of view and conviction. He believes the evangelicals need what Mennonites have to give concerning the biblical view on non-resistance.

He has found that C. I. Scofield promoted non-resistance in his writing *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (1936). William Darby, the father of dispensationalism, had the same position, he said, "probably where Scofield got it." It's still an emphasis the Plymouth Brethren have, he said. "In all of my classes I make sure students know that I'm sick and tired of running the fundamentalists down."

Of the courses he has offered over 25 years at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, "the area I have felt I have given most is the course I have taught 24 times, Biblical Theology, in which the inductive approach to Bible study of individual books is applied to the Bible as a whole."

In terms of no longer having a regular classroom setting for interaction with people, Jake speaks of the immediate task facing him "of finding something much more deliberately involving." He plans to continue writing a workbook on biblical theology which "reflects my own work over 27 years and the input of many students."

# Two ways to peace

Once again we have experienced that momentary pause in the year's usual madness. At Christmas the whole world seems to wonder wistfully if "peace on earth" could be more than a dream.

The angels' song is both a fascination and a frustration. We are moved by lovely carols about peace on earth until we hear the call for more missiles to keep peace through strength.

*"Saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace!" (Jeremiah 6:13; 8:11; Ezekiel 13:10, 16).*

These cries from the prophets tell us that the word "peace" has been surrounded by controversy for ages. The concept is so muddled that some are using the term *shalom* rather than peace. To uncover the positive, wholistic meanings of this Hebrew word seems easier than to keep struggling against the influences of Greek philosophy, Roman legalism and pop psychology that shape our use of "peace."

But this distinction is not the focus of our attention. The dilemma of the prophets remains whether we use *shalom*, *eirene*, *pax* or peace.

The people denounced so harshly by Jeremiah and Ezekiel are called "false prophets." Our hindsight proves that was correct. But at the time, the court prophets likely had far more support for their assessment than Yahweh's messengers. They were honest and respectable believers in the way of peace they were promoting. By faith, Ezekiel denounced their shalom as "false and delusive visions," "flattering and lying prophecies" and "whitewashed walls."

Shalom had been seen as Yahweh's gift, experienced only as God's rule effected righteousness and justice. The Mosaic covenant promised this as God's reward for faithful obedience. Shalom is realized in the resulting harmony and mutuality of all relationships as the Creator intended—it cannot be forced or bought.

But Israel's insistence on a human king with permanent institution radically changed the basis of its shalom. Israel quickly moved to the law-and-order peace of other nations, based on the wish and whim of the king. He had the power of a standing militia to enforce it and prophets to support it.

Thus the stage was set for a bitter clash. Yahweh's spokesmen insisted this was not the same kind of peace; their opponents were engaging in double-talk, "calling evil good and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). The lie was not that Israel had no shalom but that they were believing in a false and deceptive shalom.

I no longer feel any need to deny or belittle the Pentagon's claim of peacemaking. Like every military power before them, they are true to the peace they understand. (Apologies to the Canadian and international readers—please adapt as it fits.) One of the lessons I learned in Vietnam was a healthy respect for the soldiers' commitment to their cause. Such willingness to put one's life on the line day after day is an incredible thing. Until I have matched that dedication to the way of peace in which I believe, I will be slow to accuse them.

*"My peace I give you . . . a peace the world cannot give" (John 14:27, JB).*

This quotation from Jesus alerts us to the same dilemma in the New Testament. In fact, Jesus appeared to play with this confusion in his statement, "I have not come to bring shalom, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34).

Jesus was the prince of shalom expected to usher in the promised age of shalom. So this was a critical concept for his ministry. The anticipation of the new age was that the Messiah would "guide our feet into the way of shalom" (Luke 1:79). Proof of Messiah's coming depended on re-establishing the shalom of God on earth as the angels proclaimed. To interpret "a peace the world cannot give" as meaning an inner, spiritual peace is a serious distortion of what God was doing in Christ.

During the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem the crowds echoed the angels' song in the joyful refrain "Shalom in heaven." That was the setting which caused Jesus to weep over the city with the lament, "Would that even today you knew the things that make for shalom!" (Luke 19:38, 42). He knew at that moment that Israel was again rejecting God as king and God's will as the sole basis for its shalom.

The impact of this truth dawned on me when I saw the connection between 1 Samuel 7:14 and Matthew 4:17; the king who was rejected was coming to rule on earth once more. I finally realized why the kingdom (rule of God) was the most dominant theme in Jesus' ministry. The re-establishment of God as king was the only way shalom could become reality. The formula for shalom is, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

But John 11 shows the Jewish leaders deliberately choosing the rule of Rome instead. In a remarkable parallel to 1 Samuel 7, they voted for the law and order of Rome and rejected the shalom of "this man," which looked too risky and vulnerable.

A graphic example of the two ways to peace is the trial of Jesus before Pilate (or of Pilate before Jesus). Pilate taunted Jesus about being so easy to capture; if he is a king, where is his power to keep the peace? Both claimed the power to rule, one by the sword and the other by witness. Both were committed to peace, one by washing his hands of blood and the other by suffering for the truth.

Both the prophets and Jesus knew that the world's false security and hopes must be broken up before true shalom could be formed. Jesus said he was attacking the "shalom" of "armor" (based on power over people—domination and oppression) in order to offer the shalom of God (based on power by people—response and commitment).

That was an extremely political mission, involving loyalties and power. God's missionary cry in both testaments was, "Let my people go." The Spirit confronts every tyranny, oppression, power or god that counters God's vision of shalom. Salvation and mission in the biblical sense can aptly be described as "pure politics."

*"From whence does my help come?" (Psalm 121:1).*

This is a call for us to return to a definition of faith that has meaning for daily life. The psalmist saw some people trusting in horses and chariots while others trusted in God. The basic choice is still the same; one cannot follow both ways to peace.

The law-and-order powers of this world have risen and fallen like waves on the restless sea. Empires come and go with no more awareness for the reasons of their fate than the Jewish leaders showed. Can no one see that the very means used to "enforce the peace" corrupts the spirit, crumbles the foundation and seals the doom? It may take a generation or more, but violence always gives birth to more violence.

We have been hesitant to proclaim the declaration of Jesus that "all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52). That is a historical observation; it is also a faith premise amid a world desperate for peace. Only when we have taken a decisive stance on the two ways to peace—fully committed to God's will and God's way—only then will we begin to see shalom on earth . . . as it is in heaven. *James E. Metzler*

*James Metzler, AMBS admissions counselor*

**The International Nestle Boycott Committee** has decided to suspend its international boycott of Nestle Company products. The Nestle/INBC agreement requires Nestle to severely limit the distribution of free supplies of formula, include adequate information about the risks or hazards of improper formula feeding in their literature and on their labels, and restrict promotion in the health system. A recommendation to suspend the boycott for a six-month period to monitor Nestle's compliance with the agreement was presented to a gathering of boycott-endorsing organizations and their Third World partners in Mexico City Feb. 3-5.

**The Unity Peace Prize** is a contest in which prizes of $100, $50 and $25 will be awarded to the authors of essays deemed to be of outstanding merit. The essays are to be concerned with the biblical basis for peace and its current applications. The contest is open to all. Essays should be no longer than 2,500 words and typewritten. They should be submitted no later than April 16 to Lawrence Klippenstein, Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4. For more information write the above address or Norman Klippenstein, 301-2 Emily St., Winnipeg, MB R3E 1Y7, phone (204) 775-4352.

**Pope John Paul II** recently urged the world's scientists to give up war-oriented projects in "factories of death." "More than any other, the scientific community is a community of peace," said the pontiff. He added, "By refusing certain fields of research, inevitably destined . . . for deadly purposes, the scientists of the whole world ought to be united in a common readiness to disarm science and to form a providential force for peace."

# 'Binding and loosing' becomes theme of polity conference

Winnipeg—"Binding and loosing" is bound to be a phrase that will come up regularly in Conference of Mennonites in Canada circles in the coming years.

This term featured prominently in the "Authority and the Church" study conference held Jan. 29-31 at Canadian Mennonite Bible College here. The conference was attended by 165 registrants from across Canada plus many drop-in guests from the college and surrounding communities.

The study conference was a direct outgrowth of the enthusiastic response accorded a paper presented by Rod Sawatsky at the 1983 annual CMC sessions. The paper, entitled "Autonomy and Accountability: Church Polity Within the CMC," outlined problems facing the CMC and its member congregations in the areas of authority, leadership, structure, congregationalism and intercongregational accountability.

To continue the process of study and dialogue, CMC's Committee on Ministerial Leadership and CMBC's extension committee jointly organized this non-decision-making study conference open to anyone interested.

The process followed at the conference basically combined two formats. First, prepared papers were presented to the gathering followed by open discussion of these on the floor. Secondly, participants were divided into small working groups to work at specific areas and come up with a position paper to be presented to the conference and to be passed on to the Committee on Ministerial Leadership. An appointed reference committee was asked at various points in the proceedings to present prepared reactions or responses to what was being said.

Bernie Wiebe, editor of *The Mennonite*, opened the conference Sunday evening by delineating five major categories of authority issues in the CMC: authority and power, leadership, structural issues, church positions and statements, and women in our churches.

Lydia Harder, a graduate theology student from Edmonton, spoke on the theme "Authority, Truth and the Church." She stated that the community of faith needs an authoritative truth that answers the questions of identity (who are we?) and of existence (how shall we live?). To arrive at this authoritative truth the church must be a Scripture-interpreting community and a binding and loosing (Matthew 16 and 18) community.

Waldemar Janzen, a CMBC professor in Old Testament studies, outlined an Old Testament perspective on authority. He named four types of authority: patriarchal, priestly, royal and prophetic, and suggested contemporary parallels. The church must allow room within its concept of the priesthood of all believers for the legitimate utilization and exercise of these offices of authority.

David Schroeder, also a CMBC professor, gave a New Testament perspective. The church, he said, must be an authoritative binding and loosing fellowship as explained in Matthew 16 and 18. This is the church's mission—binding people to the truth of the gospel and loosing them from falseness and sin.

John Friesen, another CMBC professor, spoke on "Authority in Anabaptist Perspective." He explained that for the early Anabaptists authority resided in the local community of believers, not in the state, the sword or the church hierarchy. Authority was exercised in the interpretation of Scripture, calling of leaders, use of the ban and the refusal to bear arms.

*Study conference co-moderator Gary Gerber (left) with Waldemar Janzen*

Cal Redekop, a sociology professor at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont., brought a sociological perspective to the discussion. He talked about power, authority and leadership—PAL, and said that where people get together there is "power." We in our churches have tremendous power, but to harness it we must give power to the proper people in the form of "authority." Then we expect motivation and direction, or "leadership" from those in authority.

The closing speaker was J. Lawrence Burkholder, president of Goshen (Ind.) College, on the topic of "Authority Lost, Authority Gained." He said that in our time authority and leadership are based on the ability to achieve goals. The Mennonite church needs stronger leadership from its brightest and best people, as well as from strong, authoritative conferences and conference ministers.

The small working groups came up with a number of recommendations to the conference and the Committee on Ministerial Leadership. *Dave Tiessen*


## Accounting and business

Full-time teaching position in accounting and business at **Eastern Mennonite College**.

Send resume to:
Dean Albert Keim
Eastern Mennonite College
Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

**Auxiliary bishop of San Salvador** Monsignor Gregorio Rosa Chavez condemned the U.S. invasion of Grenada in a homily last Oct. 30. The next day Salvadoran radio broadcast a threat that unless such homilies were immediately suspended, there would be drastic penalties. The threat was signed by the Anticommunist Brigade, which has claimed responsibility for the murders and kidnappings of many Salvadoran "subversives."

**On the Line** is described as "a walk initiated by women on behalf of all peoples for lasting peace, justice, beauty and freedom." A group of women plans to walk along the route of the "nuclear train," which carries nuclear weapons from the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas, to the Trident nuclear submarine base in Bangor, Wash., and to the Charleston (S.C.) Naval Weapons Station. Departing March 21 from Bangor, the group will walk to Amarillo, then on to Charleston. On the way they plan to appeal to the people of the communities en route to make known the presence of the train.

**Enough highly enriched uranium** to produce 85 atomic bombs has disappeared from a top-secret nuclear weapons plant at Oak Ridge, Tenn., during the plant's 35-year operating life. The cumulative loss is 1,710 pounds. Of that, 178 pounds—enough for nine atomic bombs—have been reported missing in the past three years, after security and accounting procedures were tightened, according to documents obtained by Scripps-Howard News. Officials at Union Carbide, which operates the plant, and at the Energy Department refused to discuss the losses, the largest ever reported at a single government or government-controlled facility.

# MCC U.S. pledges increased aid to Central American refugees

Blaine, Wash. (MCC U.S.)—In response to stories of need and fear from representatives of Mennonite churches working with refugees in the United States from Central America, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. adopted a statement at its annual meeting here Jan. 26 about Central America and refugees. It calls on North American Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to prayer, service and prophetic witness for those suffering because of the crisis there.

The statement listed several initiatives for the coming year: (1) increasing aid to refugees, undocumented aliens and displaced people in the United States by providing them with sanctuary and safe haven and by helping them gain political asylum and landed immigrant status, (2) providing bond money for those who are being held, (3) listening and learning from Central American Christians and (4) making the public more aware of the roots of violence and the consequences of U.S. government policies.

The statement also urged readers to encourage U.S. government leaders to (1) support negotiations in Central America rather than send more arms, (2) provide economic assistance to governments there that protect human rights and distribute economic benefits to all sectors of society and (3) adopt legislation that would suspend the deportation of Salvadoran refugees from the United States until their safe haven can be assured elsewhere.

In other business, the board heard reports from the regional directors and board chairpersons.

The board also approved two revisions of the Central States bylaws that define membership and voting eligibility.

Carl Good of Mennonite Mental Health Services reported that six of the eight MMHS centers will explore possibilities for expanding program and facilities in 1984. He noted MMHS interest in providing mental health care in the Caribbean.

Paul Leatherman, director of SELFHELP Crafts, reported that sales increased 30 percent in 1983.

In 1984 SELFHELP Crafts will be hiring an education coordinator to share information about the overseas producers, their countries and cultures with North Americans. They will also hire an international program consultant who will travel to producer groups overseas, assisting them with design, product development, quality control and marketing.

The board approved the 1984 program plans and a 1984 budget of $2,491,800. This budget is 20 percent above the $2,061,114 spent by MCC U.S. in 1983. The most significant increases in budget are in the U.S. programs and in the regional offices.

MCC is budgeting for U.S. contributions to increase approximately 8 percent in 1984.

Anna Juhnke of North Newton, Kan., was elected to a three-year term as chairperson of MCC U.S. and Phil Rich of Archbold, Ohio, to a two-year term as vice chairperson.


## Mediation training seminar

with Ron Kraybill
Mennonite Conciliation Service

**Date:** March 16-18

**Place:** MCC Building, 1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg

**Cost:** $40 (includes meals)

Enrollment limited to 40 people.

To register send $10 to:
Mediation Services
202-818 Portage Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4.

**Public meeting:** March 18 at 7 p.m.
"Conflict in the Church"
at Aberdeen Church, Aberdeen and Andrews, Winnipeg

## Administrative position

Secretary of mission communications

**Commission on Overseas Mission**
General Conference Mennonite Church

Position available: **summer 1984**

Person needs administrative, journalistic, relational and communications skills.

Responsible for missionary itineration, scheduling and coordination of promotional materials.

**Apply to:**
Erwin Rempel
COM
Box 347
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Phone (316) 283-5100.

## Director of nursing

**Salem Personal Care Home** requires a full-time D.O.N. Modern facility with 118 residents and a total staff of 98 E.F.T. positions with 56 E.F.T. positions in the nursing department.

The following are an asset for the position:
—B.N. degree
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Good salary and fringe benefits. Starting date is negotiable. Apply to:

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Winkler, MB R0G 2X0
Phone (204) 325-4316.

**As many as 65 countries** may be unable to feed their populations by the year 2000, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. And even this may be too positive a picture, says FAO, since the study made a number of assumptions which bias it toward optimism. For example, the study assumed that food could move freely across national boundaries, that all available land would be used for food crops and that food supplies would be equally distributed. It also allowed for only a minimum recommended intake of calories.

**Bethesda Mennonite Church** in Henderson, Neb., held Bible studies and a workshop on stewardship Jan. 21-23. Featured speakers were Raymond Frey, stewardship director for the General Conference, Lester Janzen, western regional representative of the Mennonite Foundation, and John Rudy, stewardship minister and financial counselor with Mennonite Mutual Aid. The weekend included six workshops, two Sunday services and two Bible study sessions.

**The Amway Corporation** was recently fined $25 million for cheating Canadian customs of $148 million between 1965 and 1980. Amway pleaded guilty to underdeclaring the value of its products shipped to Canada by 70 percent. Amway, which stands for "the American Way," sells household and personal products.

# Euro parliament now scheduled; MWC lodging becomes critical

Scottdale, Pa. (Meetinghouse)—Housing has become a critical issue for planners of the MWC XI Assembly according to Paul N. Kraybill, executive secretary of Mennonite World Conference.

The European Parliament, representing 10 nations, planned a special inaugural session for the newly elected parliament in July 1984. This is an exceptional meeting since the parliament, while meeting about 10 times per year, does not normally meet in July.

This has caused some anxiety for conference planners for the MWC XI Assembly. The hotel requirements of the parliament normally are about equal to the space required for the MWC XI Assembly to be held in July 1984. This special parliament, however, will require even more space than usual because of the special character of the session.

It is now clear that the parliament will meet on precisely the same dates as the XI Assembly. Fortunately Mennonite World Conference in cooperation with its official travel agency, Menno Travel Service, already in December 1981 contacted the city's hotels and reserved large blocks of space in preparation for the XI Assembly.

At that time it was clear that no parliament sessions were planned on that date in July 1984; the special parliament session is a recent development. Now there are some who question whether it will be possible for the parliament and the Mennonite World Conference both to meet at the same time.

It is clear, however, that the Mennonite World Conference cannot at this late date change its dates and likewise the parliament has refused to change to another date or location.

The city of Strasbourg has clearly supported and affirmed the contract written by Mennonite World Conference with the various city agencies and with the hotels. The hotels have also clearly declared their intentions to honor the contract written between them and Mennonite World Conference.

Mennonite World Conference, together with Menno Travel Service, has adequate space reserved to accommodate the projected attendance anticipated for the XI Assembly. However, people planning to attend have already reserved more than half the available space and have made down payments.

It is of extreme urgency that every person planning to reserve hotel space for the XI Assembly do so as promptly as possible.

# *Conference receipts for '83 total 96.1 percent of budget*

Newton, Kan (GCMC)—Giving to the worldwide ministries of the General Conference Mennonite Church totaled $4,866,418 during the 1983 fiscal year, or about 3.9 percent short of budget.

The 96.1 percent showing was divided among the conference's four major programs as follows: Commission on Overseas Mission, $3,175,517 or 96.5 percent; Commission on Home Ministries, $866,848 or 93.5 percent; Commission on Education, $383,301 or 93.4 percent; and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, $440,752 or 101.2 percent.

The General Conference's Women in Mission, meanwhile, finished the year with $237,860 or 101.4 percent of their budget.

"The primary reason that the receipt percentages of the commissions and the seminary differ so widely is that more contributions in 1983 were designated to particular commissions or prorated to all four program bodies," said conference treasurer Ted W. Stuckey. " 'Where most needed' receipts were $25,000 less in 1983 than 1982. Contributions designated this way are distributed to the commissions which are furthest from meeting their budgets. Therefore, although CHM and COE split the total 'where most needed' monies received in 1983, there were not enough contributions so designated to bring those commissions to the levels that COM and MBS received through designated and prorated contributions."

General secretary Vern Preheim added, "The increase in receipts in 1983 over 1982 was $172,818. We are grateful for this strong support and anticipate an even greater increase in 1984."

1983 marks the third consecutive year in which the General Conference has failed to reach its budget goals. Members of the conference's various commissions and boards will gather in Newton March 2-5 for the annual Council of Commissions, at which time the current fiscal year's budget will be approved. The latest budget shortfall is bound to make discussions there more difficult.

The conference's Division of Administration and General Board tentatively decided last fall to hold any increases for 1984 to 4 percent above the 1983 budget.

In terms of actual conference expenditures for 1983, Stuckey said that "the experience of the commissions differed widely. CHM budget expenditures totaled $938,256, which greatly lowered its cash reserves. COE spent $401,786, also lowering its cash reserves. COM spent $3,151,247, which was about $24,000 less than it received, so that its cash balances increased slightly. The fiscal year of MBS ends June 30, so comparable figures are not yet available for the seminary."

**Canada's 400,000 university students** are soaking up far more alcohol than is normal among the adult population, according to a report from the Addiction Research Foundation of Canada. More than 90 percent of students drink alcohol, compared with about 85 percent of all Canadian adults. At least 70 percent drink more than once a week, compared with just 61 percent of other adults.

**Sometime before 2:15 a.m.** on Jan. 17, a fire broke out in Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary's administration building, which was being renovated into a campus center. Firefighters from Harrisonburg, Va., and neighboring counties responded to the three-alarm blaze, but by the time the fire was contained at 4 a.m., the building was completely gutted. Because demolition and renovation had been under way since this past August, the building was not in use. No one was injured and valuable records and furnishings had been moved to other locations on campus.

**A special couples banquet** on Jan. 12 foreshadowed a month-long emphasis on marriage planned for the month of February at First Mennonite Church of Christian in Moundridge, Kan. Bernie Wiebe, editor of *The Mennonite*, spoke at the event, which ended with a renewal of marriage vows for those present. To prepare people for upcoming events, the church also provided audio cassettes, a filmstrip and additional books on marriage. About 40 people checked out books to read in January. "We're having this emphasis under the assumption that any marriage can be improved," pastor James Gingerich said.

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# workers

*Braun*

*Cater*

*Hoeksema*

*Hurt*

*Ens*

*Fast*

*J. Janzen*

*K. Janzen*

*Gale*

*Goering*

*Clarence Braun*, Altona (Man.) Bergthaler Church, began a one-year MVS term Sept. 1, 1983, as a child-care worker at Friendship Day-Care Center in Hutchinson, Kan. He is a 1980 graduate of W. C. Miller Collegiate, Altona. His parents are Menno and Helen Braun of Altona.

*Lawrence Cater*, Capitol Hill United Methodist Church, Cambridge, Md., began a one-year MVS term Sept. 6, 1983, as assistant counselor at Transitional Resources for Young Adults in Seattle. His mother is Laura Cater of Cambridge.

*Robert Ens*, Lawrence (Kan.) Fellowship, began a two-year MVS term Nov. 14, 1983, as arts and crafts director at East Fresno (Calif.) Boys Club. His parents are G. George and Evelyn Ens of Hillsboro, Kan.

*Henry Fast*, Boissevain, Man., has been appointed staff psychiatrist at Eden Mental Health Centre, Winkler, Man. Based at Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg, Fast will serve the Winnipeg constituency as well as devoting one day each week to the Steinbach community.

*Eric Gale*, Plow Creek Church, Tiskilwa, Ill., began a one-year MVS term Aug. 24, 1983, as houseparent at Argentine Youth Services in Kansas City, Kan. His parents are David and Margaret Gale of Tiskilwa.

*Carmen Goering*, Eden Church, Moundridge, Kan., began a one-year MVS term Sept. 16, 1983, as church information coordinator at Center for Urban Education in Portland, Ore. Her parents are Elmer and Linda Goering of Moundridge.

*Deborah Hoeksema*, Addisville Reformed Church, Richboro, Pa., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 23, 1983, as outreach aide for Mid-Iowa Community Action in Ames, Iowa. She has a bachelor's degree from Hope College, Holland, Mich. Her parents are Robert and Lucille Hoeksema of Richboro.

*Tony Hurt*, St. Margaret's Anglican Church, Winnipeg, began a two-year MVS term Aug. 25, 1983, as recreation/physical education teacher at Edgewood Children's Center in St. Louis. He has a bachelor's degree from Durham University, England. His parents are Norman and Jean Hurt of London.

*Julie Janzen*, Tacoma, Wash., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 15, 1983, working with Laotians at Cross-Lines in Kansas City, Kan. She has a bachelor's degree from Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan. Her parents are Joel and Lucille Janzen of Tacoma.

*Karen Janzen*, Tiefengrund Rosenort Church, Laird, Sask., began a one-year MVS term Sept. 1, 1983, as a child-care worker at Friendship Day-Care Center in Hutchinson, Kan. She is a 1983 graduate of Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College.

**President Reagan** has been invited by a Cleveland religious leader to have dinner in Cleveland with the poor. Responding to recent contentions by the president and his White House adviser, Edwin Meese, that hunger is not a serious problem in the United States, the head of the Greater Cleveland Interchurch Council challenged Reagan to come to Cleveland to witness hunger firsthand.

# RECORD

*Rempel*

*Yoder*

Her parents are Erwin and Elaine Janzen of Laird.

*William Klassen*, Langley (B.C.) Fellowship, has resigned as director of development at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., to become dean of the newly established Inter-Faith Academy of Peace, located on Israel's West Bank.

*Charlotte Rempel*, Sargent Avenue Church, Winnipeg, began a two-year MVS term Sept. 15, 1983, at Welcome Inn Friendship Center in Hamilton, Ont. Her parents are Frank and Joanne Rempel of Winnipeg.

*Elizabeth Yoder*, general editor for the General Conference's Commission on Education, has resigned her position effective July 1. She and her husband, Perry, and their two sons will move to Elkhart, Ind., where Perry has accepted a faculty position at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (see page A-1). Elizabeth plans to study at AMBS during the coming school year.

# CALENDAR

March 2-6—Council of Commissions, Newton, Kan.

**Canada**

March 9-11—Conference of Mennonites in Alberta, Edmonton

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Consultation '84

is a three-day event which will bring all Provincial and District Education Committee members, COE commission members and staff, and other persons working with General Conference educational programs (about 70 persons) together in Newton (March 16-18) to talk about Christian education.

Time will be devoted to each of the following:

—Awareness of the total General Conference work (including COM, CHM, Women in Mission, and COE;

—Clarifying and working together on Christian education concerns;

—Introduction of revised Foundation Series for Children;

—COE goals and vision.

If you have specific Christian education concerns please communicate them with your Provincial or District Education Committee so that they may bring them to CONSULTATION '84.

## Meet Paula Diller Lehman,

COE Secretary for Youth Education. As Secretary for Youth Education Paula coordinates youth work camps and the triennial youth conference and is a resource person for district, provincial and congregational youth leaders. Paula is also a consulting editor for *With* magazine and writes a column for *Builder* magazine. Paula began her work at COE in January of 1983.

## COE Calendar

**March**
16-18 CONSULTATION '84 (Newton)
**April**
1-6 Project. Teach (Owen Sound, Ont.)
**Marriage Encounter Schedule**
3/2-4, Niagara Falls, Ont., 3/16-18, North Newton, Kan. and Salem, Ore.; 4/13-15, Spruce Lake, Pa.; 5/4-6, Meadville, Pa.

## Summer Service Gives Teens Perspective

The summer work camp program is designed to allow teens, ages 15-18, an opportunity to give time and energy on a service experience. For three weeks work campers are involved in service projects, Bible study, and group living.

Here are some comments from past work campers:

*"I have changed my mind in regard to volunteering my time. I will be able to give of my time with a more willing attitude."*

*"Work camp helped me grow because I found out more about myself."*

*"Our Bible studies were good learning experiences."*

This summer the COE youth office will be offering work camp experiences in Oregon, Colorado, Manitoba, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. Encourage and challenge the young people in your congregation to participate.

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

## Let's pray for attitudes

A scary thing is happening in the General Conference Mennonite Church. It appears a small but vocal minority is trying to change the church's definition of sin.

I am concerned that people who are attempting to promote and/or justify a homosexual lifestyle are given platforms they do not deserve. Agreed, the church hasn't always been accepting of people with homosexual tendencies. But rather than redefining sin, as some are attempting, the emphasis should be placed on the church's responsibility to lovingly help the homosexual repent, as it does with other sinners.

It is unfortunate that this whole issue has created a large chasm between two sides. There has been name calling on both sides; rumors and innuendos are flying about. And we call ourselves Christians?

Please join me in praying for our own attitudes, for those people who justify a homosexual lifestyle and for all other sinners, so we all may come to the full saving grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Also pray that the conference will "believe in the divine inspiration and the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God and the only trustworthy guide of faith and life." *Dan Feil, 790 SE Fir Villa Road, Dallas, OR 97338*

Jan. 25

## Crisis is spiritual

I believe Vern Preheim asks the wrong question in "Do We Have a Leadership Crisis?" (Jan. 3 issue). Isn't the question, "Do we lack spiritual leadership?" It would be better to think through our mode of leadership. The editorial says, "A significant dimension of our leadership crisis has been unclarity on the kind of leaders we want and need." The problem is whether we want what God wants. People in the Old Testament did not want God's leadership, so they chose Saul. Too often we have the idea that Christianity is a democracy and we can choose who we want to lead.

Popularity becomes more important than fundamental principles of the Word. God gave gifts to men in order to follow Jesus Christ. I do not believe we have a leadership crisis. But we have a spiritual crisis. We must discern God's Word and stand with it.

It is unpopular to go against the tide of what many of our conference leaders want to do or stand for. But if we are to have organizational procedures, then we need to follow the basis of the organization.

The arm of flesh will fail, and I believe that I am seeing this more and more with different organizations. Budgets not met, liberalism on the rise, our schools turning out ministers who not only doubt the Word as given but believe it to be full of errors. Instead of teaching the doctrines of holy writ, we are off to demonstrate or march for a cause that will never come about because it is not ordained by God.

Servant leadership is correct, but we cannot be servant leaders if we do not hold to the one who called us. I do not think our society is much more complex than what I see Paul, Titus and Timothy ministering in.

I pray for those in positions of influence to hear what is being said by those who are in the churches. Many do not like what they are hearing from those in leadership and many do not like what is taken up as causes in place of the cause of Christ. *Jerry R. O'Connell, Box 246, Richfield, PA 17086*

Jan. 26

## New ministry in Jerusalem

The Jan. 17 issue of *The Mennonite* was first rate. It had just the right blend between inspirational, historical, social action and some well thought out reader response.

Dona and I will be moving to the Peace Academy in Jerusalem in March. We need your prayers for this important task and hope that *The Mennonite* will continue to come to us without too much delay.

A special thanks to Frieda Barkman for translating an important message—indeed, isn't it the heart of the good news? *Bill Klassen, Development Office, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6*

Jan. 30

## Distressed at confusion

I am distressed to see the ongoing battle in our churches and in *The Mennonite* regarding the issue of homosexuality. The issue at stake is not homosexuality at all (if it were, those who most adamantly condemn homosexuality would be engaging in active dialogue with gay and lesbian Christians to better understand them). The real issue is biblical interpretation. The questions of how the Bible should be used and what authority it has in the Christian life are important ones for our churches to be discussing. It is tragic that the dignity of so many of our members gets trampled because the biblical interpretation issue is confused with moral and social issues.

This confusion is there in the Burkholder letter (Jan. 17 issue). He claims that acknowledging the reality of homosexual orientation is to say "modern science knows more than the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures." This comment reflects what I believe is an improper use of Scripture. The Bible is not a science textbook; therefore, its truth is not scientific. Claiming that the earth was flat because of biblical references to the "four corners of the earth" resulted in the church condemning Galileo and many others. The problem then, as now with the homosexuality issue, was and is trying to make the Bible prove what it cannot prove. *Russell Schmidt, Pacific School of Religion, 1798 Scenic Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709*

Jan. 31

*Editor's note: We are trying to leave the topic alone for now and hope we can take more time to study the Bible before we continue this discussion.*

## Responses to Kaufman

To put it bluntly, S. Roy Kaufman has it all wrong (Jan. 17 issue).

Kaufman makes the incredible equation of rural being Christian and urban being evil. There are problems in the city, but the country is not the Garden of Eden.

"Greedy and idolatrous human nature" creates rural culture just as much as it creates cities. The country is as much a "place of human rebellion against God" as the city.

"City related to country as master to slave" could come right out of Karl Marx.

"Faithfulness in urban ministry must lead to the demise of the city." This is the same attitude held by many 19th-century missionaries. "Go out and give the savages salvation and white man's ways." Christianity means the demise of the sinful elements of every culture, but it does not mean the *destruction* of any culture.

Kaufman also seems to have a problem with the Bible. Jesus did not live in the country, and he ministered both in the country and the city. Kaufman gets around the vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation by blunt denial. Early

Christianity was urban, as was early Anabaptism.

Kaufman is less influenced by biblical world views than by an overrated French philosopher (Jacques Ellul), an outdated leftist ideology and the babblings of secular futurists.

Every culture is permeated with human rebellion and no subculture or geographic region is inherently more or less Christian than another. Christianity posits all as sinful and redeemable. *John D. Thiesen, 112 S.E. 8th, Newton, KS 67114*

Feb. 2

For most of my 25 years of ministry I have been involved in the urban church. My wife and I met, were married and had our children in the lower east side of the Bronx, New York City. We lived and ministered there for 15 years. For the past seven years we have been living and ministering in Philadelphia.

I do not understand the gospel to be either pro-rural or pro-urban. Rather it needs to be incarnate in both rural and urban situations.

I find Kaufman's arguments (Jan. 17 issue) intriguing. It is so easy to make a case for ourselves and cite the authors who agree with us, but in the final analysis, "Is God convinced?" (Proverbs 16:2, Living Bible).

People who opt to argue for the intrinsic evil of the city will quote Jacques Ellul and point out a cause-and-effect relationship between Cain's choice and the development of the city in Genesis 4. This argument overlooks the role of "cities of refuge" as a part of God's positive provision.

We would be closer to the truth if we would own that human organizations have potential for both good and evil.

Did not God choose Jerusalem as the city of Zion, where he identified with the temple, centralized worship and a system of religion that utilized Jerusalem as a focal point to gather and scatter at special seasons of the year? Was not this imagery also utilized in the prophets to project into the church age the universality of God's message?

When Jesus needed a concept to describe his new community, he borrowed it from the Greek city-state, the *ekklesia*, not from the rural communities. Non city dwellers were pagans or heathen (dwellers in the heaths).

I find it troublesome when we identify the values that emerge from our new life in Christ as either rural or urban. This reminds me a lot of Old Testament Baal worship. There was a Baal for the city and a Baal for the country, a Baal of the hills and a Baal for the valleys.

God has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, who is neither rural nor urban, but by the resurrection has become Lord of all. *John L. Freed, 1407 Huntingdon Pike, Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006*

Feb. 2

## Artwork is helpful

I express my appreciation for Orlando Wiebe's artwork on the cover of the Jan. 31 issue. Not only is this piece aesthetically pleasing, but I also enjoy how it integrates man and nature. We need to do more thinking along those lines in our world.

I hope we'll be seeing more of this creativity around. *Nancy Doner-Dorries, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8*

Feb. 3

## Abuse of authority

The article on authority (Jan. 3 issue) by Mike Klassen caused me a sleepless night. It is written in a convincing manner. The editors have dressed it up with a beautiful and palatable layout, which makes it even more convincing.

I was reminded of an anecdote that I heard concerning Benjamin Unruh. He was an accomplished rhetorician. After speaking to a group of students for 30 minutes, none of them believed in God. He spoke another 30 minutes and all of them believed in God. In *Gorgias*, Plato explains that the power of the rhetorician is abused when it is not used in the service of truth.

The power of the snake is said to be dunamis. Yet when you read Revelation 9:10, you find that the scorpion's power to injure is exousia. Death and Hades have the exousia to kill (Revelation 6:9). We are admonished to turn from the exousia of Satan to God. And how does the exousia (covering) on the head of a woman "exercise informed obedience?" (1 Corinthians 11:10).

When a dunamis went out from Jesus to heal the woman who touched his garment, was it not an informed personal power? (Luke 8:46). When the disciples snub a man for casting out demons, "because he was not of their little group," does Jesus instruct them about exousia? No, Jesus says that they should not forbid whoever does a dunamis in Jesus' name (Mark 9:39). How can a dunamis in Jesus' name be self-centered?

Jesus does not do dunamis because of their unbelief (Matthew 13:58). Where is the coercion? Is not faith a personal commitment that elicits the dunamis of God?

Lust is said to be "out of the jurisdiction of religious judgment and punishment." Paul was a Pharisee. He certainly knew that the Old Testament law said, "Thou shalt not lust" (Romans 7:7f).

Biblical usage of the terms "dunamis" and "exousia" is obviously at variance with the author's argument. Ironically we experience an abuse of authority even as he tries to instruct us in this matter. *David Janzen, Box 594, Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON L0S 1J0*

Feb. 3

## Old hymn was one of my first

I appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed the article "An Old Tune Sparks New Faith" by Frieda Barkman (Jan. 17 issue). The hymn "Gott ist die Liebe" belongs to my earliest memories.

Both of my parents came from Germany as adults and I was the second oldest of their children. So German was my first language—my only language until I started to school. Papa loved to play the piano and sing and so did Aunt Selma, Mama's sister, who made her home with us.

I like Barkman's translation, but for some reason "God loves so dearly" does not quite have the depth of meaning for me that "God *ist* die Liebe" does. But "God *is* Love" doesn't fit the melody. *Amelia Mueller, 604 North St., Halstead, KS 67056*

Feb. 6

## Inclusive language Bible

If anyone needs clarification of the "Inclusive language Bible" I refer you to a review of the same by Elizabeth Achtenmeier, one of my favorite theologians, in *Interpretation* magazine of Union Seminary of Richmond, Va., where she is visiting professor of homiletics and Old Testament. She says the book is a systematic attempt to remove sexuality from man and impose it on God. In this translation "women are always women but men are consistently neutered." In summary, she says the National Council has made the gospel subject to society. See *Interpretation*, (January 1984 issue). *Ward W. Shelly, Route 2, Box 51, Fortuna, MO 65034*

Feb. 8

# Mennonite World Conference: a capsule view

*Cornelius J. Dyck*

It was late when Wilma, my wife, and I took what may have been the last bus into the city. We were in Amsterdam participating in the eighth Mennonite World Conference. It had been a good day, we felt, as we settled back for the ride. Suddenly our attention was caught by a man on the sidewalk who seemed to be going from door to door trying his key. A drunk, we thought, until we noticed even in the dim light that he seemed to be wearing a plain coat. "One of ours," we said. "Let's get off." As we walked back to him we noticed that he was indeed trying his key in door after door. Yes, he was an MWC participant from America, and he was lost. Worse yet, he said he had lost his registration slip with the street and number of his lodging place on it. In Amsterdam all houses can look alike, especially at night. We headed for a street light where we looked through all his papers and, sure enough, I soon spotted his registration form with street address and house number. It was indeed the wrong street but only a few streets from where he really wanted to go. We walked there together and lo, the key fit. We have met the dear brother several times since and he continues to be grateful for our "rescue." There were a lot of keyholes in Amsterdam which he had not yet tried that night.

When I think of MWC I think of Mennonites coming from about 44 countries hoping they will feel they belong there—like a key in the keyhole for which it was made. That is asking a lot. Cultural, social and language traditions are so different from place to place. How can a U.S. or Canadian "Hi" compare with a German bow and handshake for a morning greeting? Or how can a bow and a handshake compare with a Latino *abrazo* (embrace)? Or how can that compare with a French or Russian kiss on both cheeks? I plan not to be a U.S. greeter in Strasbourg next July, even if there are 6,500 participants as expected. What barriers can culture or geography build that love and the strong power of the Holy Spirit cannot overcome?

The Spirit has in fact had problems with Anabaptist-Mennonites also in Strasbourg in the past. In the 16th century, Strasbourg was one of the major crossroads of Europe. It was also a tolerant city where Anabaptists felt relatively safe. At least six Anabaptist-Mennonite conferences were held there in that century: 1554, 1555, 1557, 1568, 1592 and 1607. Some think these were only ministers' conferences, but if the report that 600 people were present in 1554 is correct, there were obviously many others present also. The aim of the conferences was to achieve unity. The divisive issue was the heavy theological one on the origin of the flesh of Christ—from heaven or from Mary? But progress was made, for by the fourth conference in 1568 this issue was only one among 26 articles they had agreed on. The article on the heavenly flesh of Christ admonished believers to avoid disputes and to follow biblical teaching (which they all thought they were doing). Once considered a peculiar doctrine, S. Voolstra, newly appointed professor at the Amsterdam Mennonite seminary, has recently published a book, *Het Woord Is Vlees Geworden* (1982; *The Word Has Become Flesh*), showing how central this doctrine was and is to Mennonite thought.

When we think about Mennonite history we often jump from 16th-century origins to the present as though nothing important happened in between, like the migrations to America beginning in 1683 and to Russia beginning in 1789. But this is not the place to talk about them, not even about the many conferences held since 1607. MWC stands in continuity with these early conferences, but difficult theological problems have not normally been on the agenda. It has been easier to talk about life and work and piety than about the things which divide us. Perhaps we need more courage or faith or trust in the power of the Spirit. Perhaps we aren't really interested in discussing deep theological issues. We may prefer fellowship and worship and tours and food.

The idea of an MWC had its roots in the theological turmoil among Mennonites in early 20th-century America. The issue of unity was first raised vigorously among Mennonites in their church papers beginning in 1910 and eventually led to a series of so-called "All-Mennonite Conventions" in the American Midwest from 1913 to 1936. It was a period of stress and strain among and within Mennonite groups, with heroic efforts to slay the theological dragons of Modernism, Fundamentalism and other alien influences.

Meanwhile a brother Krehbiel from Mountain Lake, Minn., was visiting minister Heinrich Pauls in Lemberg,

*With help from Kenyan musicians, Mary Oyer (left) leads MWC Wichita participants in song.*

*MWC executive secretary Paul Kraybill at this summer's conference site*

Poland, and must have told him about the articles in the press and the conference proposals. This stimulated Pauls and his congregation to extend an invitation to all who could come to an international Mennonite gathering at Lemberg during the week preceding Pentecost 1913. The scheduling for Pentecost conjures up images of a possible Mennonite charismatic (unity) meeting as early as 1913. The vision seemed premature, and the coming of World War I ended all further planning.

Yet the idea was not forgotten. Minister Christian Neff of the Weierhof in Germany issued a call to Mennonites worldwide to join together in celebrating the 400th anniversary of the origin of Anabaptism by meeting in Basel and Zürich in June 1925. And so the sequence of events began:

1. 1925, Basel-Zürich—ca. 100 present. Celebration of Anabaptist origins.
2. 1930, Danzig—attendance small. How can Mennonites in Russia be helped?
3. 1936, Amsterdam—local attendance good. The meaning of Menno for us today.
4. 1948, Goshen-Newton—several thousand. Reconciliation after World War II.
5. 1952, Basel—600 attended. "The Church of Christ and Her Commission."
6. 1957, Karlsruhe—1,000-2,500. "The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the World."
7. 1962, Kitchener—12,500 registered. "The Lordship of Christ."
8. 1967, Amsterdam—6,000. "The Witness of the Holy Spirit."
9. 1972, Curitiba—3-4,000. "Jesus Christ Reconciles."
10. 1978, Wichita—10,000 registered, attendance as high as 15,000. "The Kingdom of God in a Changing World."
11. 1984, Strasbourg—6,000? "God's People Serve in Hope."

The central purpose of MWC is fellowship, encouragement, sharing and worship, celebration of unity and faith. Theological and other discussions have also been carried on, but marginally. Organization has been kept simple with an executive committee and a general council. The latter is large in an attempt to provide as full representation as possible, but it does so at the cost of meeting only during MWC and once between sessions. Smaller regional meetings are held to compensate for this, beginning in Paraguay 1966, Zaire 1969, and on to Indonesia, Kenya and, most recently, in Honduras. A travel fund begun in the 1960s has helped equalize the burdensome costs of travel, particularly for people from the Third World.

If we think biblically, we could argue that MCC and MWC should be one, because faith and works cannot be separated. Some have argued that point. MWC does not engage in program activities apart from its regular sessions, except for an international peace emphasis which grew out of the 1972 meetings in Brazil. But MCC workers do witness to faith, and MWC participants do not sit idly by amid the difficulties in most societies worldwide. We do not need a global organization to combine the two in our individual, congregational and conference activities.

The question of cost is also asked frequently. Is it right to spend so much money on travel by so many? It is a good question. How do we measure the value of fellowship, of encouraging each other in the faith, of meeting face to face with brothers and sisters from around the world once or twice in a lifetime? There are many testimonies to renewed spiritual energy and hope after a conference meeting. Those living and working in difficult and lonely places feel it especially strengthening to know that they are not alone. New friendships and new prayer covenants are formed.

Are you one of those planning to attend MWC XI in Strasbourg, France, July 24-29? It is important to come to the conference expectantly and prepared, not simply as a tourist "taking in" a city for a few days. The blessing will be accordingly. Those who wish to may ask to be put on the mailing list of the *MWC Newsletter*, which is mailed quarterly without charge from the MWC office at 528 Madison St., Lombard, IL 60148. Those wishing a fuller discussion of MWC will find it in the *Mennonite World Handbook* (1978), pp. 1-9. The book may also be ordered from the above address at $3.50 plus postage.
*A Meetinghouse article*

*C. J. Dyck is professor of Anabaptist and 16th-century studies at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, and is a former secretary of the Mennonite World Conference.*

## Pastoral psychology

**If We Can Love: The Mennonite Mental Health Story**, *Vernon H. Neufeld, editor (Faith and Life Press, 1983, 331 pages)*

*Reviewed by Myron Ebersole, director, pastoral services, Hershey Medical Center, Hershey, PA 17033*

"By any yardstick the Mennonite Mental Health Services story is unique. MMHS was born in the aftermath to World War II out of a conviction that people who are deeply troubled with psychiatric problems deserve a better fate than to be locked away in the large faceless wards of state institutions." So begins one of the chapters in this collection of historical accounts written by 14 participants in this mental health movement expressed through the development of eight mental health centers in the United States and Canada. It is the story of how Mennonites developed a program which is highly evaluated by four well-known mental health professionals outside the program, each of whom wrote a chapter assessing the movement as a model for effective care treatment and prevention.

The movement developed out of the experience of over 3,000 conscientious objectors, a majority of whom were Mennonites who worked in Civilian Public Service in state mental hospitals during World War II. Though not by foresight, this exposure became one element in the major revolution in care of the mentally ill during the past 40 years.

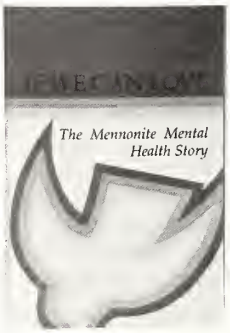
Mennonite young men did not forget their experiences. Though untrained psychologically, they found that the caring which came naturally out of their religiously based respect for people coupled with hard work and convictions about personal responsibility made a difference in the responses of the mentally ill.

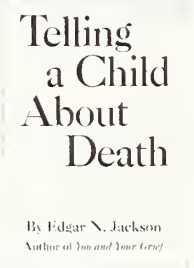
The rewarding first chapter on "Roots" by Elmer Ediger, a visionary leader and administrator throughout the movement, traces the above history as well as the broader history of societal treatment of the mentally ill. Chapter 2 reports the development of Mennonite Mental Health Services, Inc.

Chapters 3-10 are devoted to the development of the eight separate centers in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Indiana, Kansas, California and Manitoba. Though some of the details may seem tedious to the outside reader, each center's story represents a vigorous encounter between the religious community and the secular world.

Chapters 11-15 are dedicated to a "what we learn" theme, dealing with such practical issues as center organization, developing a wide range of clinical and educational programs, and public and private funding.

Paul Pruyser, Menninger Foundation psychologist-theologian, the outside commentator best known to pastoral psychology readers, writes the final chapter. He relates the MMHS story to the unique strengths of the community tradition and theology. Showing characteristic perceptiveness, he wonders if the Mennonite community, moving away from the "tribal settlements" of rural communities, increasingly reflecting many of the value problems of the surrounding society, will be able to sustain the quality of visionary leadership that developed Mennonite mental health services.




## Talking about death

**Telling a Child About Death** *by Edgar N. Jackson (Channel Press, 1967)*

*Reviewed by Anne N. Rupp, Box 8, Goessel, KS 67053*

Although this book is more than a decade old, its content is relevant and up to date. Jackson, an authority on the study of grief and author of several books written for personal and pastoral use, has written a concise, concerned book for adults (particulary parents) on the subject of children and death.

In the opening chapter Jackson emphasizes that death is a part of the emotional experience of life, and to spare children from all tragic circumstance may injure rather than help them. If children do not find adequate explanation about death they may resort to imagination. Because feelings for young children are strong, fact and fancy may become confused. Jackson appeals for a sounder approach to death in order to have a well-balanced philosophy of life.

In the following chapter the author deals with the question "When should you talk about death with a child?" He uses many practical illustrations and follows this with a chapter on *how* to tell children about death. "It is just as important to know how to talk about death as it is when to talk about death" (p. 34).

Later, a helpful chapter deals with the issue of how to say it to different ages. Jackson has a good grasp of the developmental abilities of a child and thus can deal with appropriate ways of discussing death with a child according to that child's age.

Jackson emphasizes that grief is expressed differently at different ages. Older people show it through physical symptoms, middle aged through emotional reactions and children work theirs out through behavior.

This is an excellent book for those who relate to children, whether teachers, pastors or parents.

## The best gift

**When Your Friend Is Dying** *by Betsy Burham (Chosen Books, 1982, 91 pages)*

*Reviewed by Jeanne Houser, 1027 N. Ash, Newton, KS 67114*

While books on death and dying abound, few are as powerful in simplicity and honesty as *When Your Friend Is Dying*. Betsy Burham, herself struggling with a malignancy, writes movingly of her friends' involvement—sometimes helpful, sometimes not. With sensitivity and wisdom, she offers thoughtful suggestions, from calling ahead to confirm whether a sick friend feels well enough for a visit to simply asking what she wants to talk about that day. Never does Burham become preachy or self-pitying.

Perhaps the most compelling issue addressed is the difficulty for friends to maintain hope/faith/strength in the face of repeatedly bad medical news. "There was no let up in cards, letters, people to clean house . . . what changed—dramatically—was the attitude." Burham challenges Christians to walk through that despair with each other.

"The best gift I can give is to draw in close and stay there." This brief but eloquent book merits reading and rereading as we seek to do just that.

# MEDITATION

## The shock waves of death

That first Sunday back in church after a death, it is hard to concentrate on what is being said. Death is such a shock to the system that we need ways of identifying what happens to a person that has encountered the death of a loved one.

Having experienced the death of a brother, age 11 months, of a father, age 48 years, of two grandpas and a grandma, I felt like this: It was like flying in an airplane, and death grabbed me by the back of the neck and pushed me out of the airplane as it was going very fast and very high. After I finished screaming and found my breath, in my free fall I began to think. I reached for my string to pull open my parachute that I knew would be there. I pulled it . . . and nothing happened. After my heart skipped a beat, I pulled the emergency chute and still nothing happened. Soon I began to see the tree tops, the ground and the stack of hay . . . thinking that anything would be better than that empty cement silo I was falling toward. To my surprise, I fell through the silo bottom and found myself in an open black pit filled with fog and mist and voices, wondering what I would find at the bottom of this two-mile-deep channel. It was only 16 feet square, but I couldn't touch the sides. The bottom was coming up too fast and I could not tell if there was a net at the bottom that would return me to reality or if there was another cement slab. But I did hit the net and was thrown twice almost up to the top of that black hole, only to fall a third time . . . onto a pile of dirty mattresses. Cautiously I checked for broken limbs but found none. I stayed on the mattresses, holding on to the still feeling after falling for many days. Did I dare move about in the darkness?

After several days I got up to explore the surroundings and I found a small desk, a light and God's Word. I read, reread and believed again. As I moved from wall to wall I came to a ladder on the fourth wall, the kind on which I climbed into the hayloft as a child. For two miles I climbed on that ladder and as I went up it took hardly any strength except the encouragement of friends, of God, of the air getting easier to breathe, of the fog getting lighter. I was beginning to catch a ray of sunshine when I noticed that the ladder stopped three feet from the top and that I would need someone's hand to help me out of the hole. If I fell now, it would be a hard climb back. As I looked around for someone's arm that I could trust, I realized that some arms were too busy with their own things. Some were too weak (the old and the young), some could only encourage with a voice, others with prayers; and I needed to decide whether to grasp the old rotting rope of my old life that was lying there, or reach out to God, who seemed to be above the hole rather than to the edge where I wanted to go. When I put that hand above my head, it was like Jesus hoisted me out of the pit—straight up.

As I awoke from my nap that first Sunday in church, I realized I had just asked the pastor to pray for me. I held the hand there a little longer before I took it down, so that others would also know to ask God to intercede on my behalf.

*Brian Epp*

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Some people experience death in life—the death of relationships, the death of prejudice. Some find that death is also life.

Most of us are not comfortable with death. We know our turn comes—to die ourselves or to face the death of special people in our lives—but we act to deny it.

When death comes, we may be surprised to meet it as a friend. Or it may catch us unprepared and seem like the enemy.

This issue covers several dimensions of death. It also brings news of life. We pray that it can be a source of spiritual growth for many.


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# editorial

## *Death exploded my hopes*

It came suddenly and strangely like a UFO blitzing from the sky. I had regarded death as a friend. It takes us to be forever with the One who overcame death.

On June 9, 1981, I learned to be afraid of and even to hate death. When my oldest son gave up his life, I was shocked into enmity with death. Such a sudden, swift-moving death blow was too much for my senses. Stunned into numbness, my mind kept registering, "This does not compute. There must be an error in the system."

Death became an unacceptable topic unless I could talk about Glen or at least share my grief with whoever wanted to share theirs. Funerals became almost impossible to attend. Any manuscripts submitted to me about death got a quick "pink slip" with a "sorry, your article doesn't fit our plans."

I knew it wasn't always kind. And our readers needed to see articles about death so that this inevitable universal appointment could be dealt with in the context of Christian community.

But there remains a hard spot in my being. I miss my son daily even now.

When parents or other aged people die, they take with them a portion of our past. We know that we cannot live in the past, so we gradually build on it and go on.

When a child dies, he or she takes along a portion of our hope, our future. How can you go on with an exploded hope and without a future?

I came to feel closer to King David (Psalm 22:1) and to Jesus (Matthew 27:46) in their cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" After only 23 years, his voice, his smile, his hand . . . irreversibly wrenched from us without explanation. There was a large knot in my system that refused to untangle.

In my search for comfort in the Bible, suddenly Ezekiel's walk in the valley of the dry bones (Ezekiel 37) became my walk. He saw a battlefield littered with hopes died long ago. No one had even bothered to bury the corpses. Nature and its predatory forces had done their thing. The valley was "full of bones" (v. 1) and "lo, they were very dry" (v. 2).

Ezekiel somehow saw the people of Israel and Judah in those brittle bones baked and parched by the sun. The hopes of his beloved people seemed as futile as that mass of bones bleached white and rapidly joining the dust from which they originally emerged.

Maximum stress. The overloaded circuits groan. Is it finished? Game over?

God asks Ezekiel, ". . . can these bones live?" (v. 3). Can nothing become something? Can a vacuum fill its own void? Are you joking, God?

Ezekiel, shrewd and wise and wonderful, replies, "O Lord God, thou knowest" (v. 3). Only God knows for sure. Yes, that's why the words of advice and comfort and counsel from even our fellow believers often felt so hollow. Some acted as if they knew.

That's not to deny grief ministries. Those who came to support (and in our case that was almost unanimous)—by presence, awkward words, letters, calls, food, touch—were messengers . . . yes, angels from God.

And God said, "Prophesy to these bones . . . you shall live. . . . I will cause flesh to come upon you . . . and put breath in you" (vv. 4-6). Ezekiel prophesied and the bones began to rattle. Skin covered them. Gradually even the breath came back. A new creation!

Jesus cried out in his desperate grief. Today the tomb is empty. Resurrection!

The channels still often contain static. But I too am finding new hope and more faith for the future. God somehow is anointing the smashed smithereens with his Holy Spirit. He is raising anew the dreams which seemed lost forever. His light has shone upon my darkness and the darkness could not shut out his light. The grace of God is greater than any death. Not to you because I say so. To me because I now also know.

Death exploded my hopes. God's mercy allowed me to weep, to rage, to protest, to feel guilty, to begin to find forgiveness and to discover blessing in mourning. The son of hope rose from his own explosion. Because he lives, I too want to live in the new flesh and the new breath of hope born anew out of the grave for now and for the future. God's Spirit is putting some stars back into my sky.

I haven't been able to feel gratitude to God for my son's death. But I am thankful that his grace is sufficient. And I do thank him for faith to keep walking through the valley. He walks with me. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

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## INSIDE THIS COMMISSION ON EDUCATION ISSUE:

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Talking and listening with love

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# Don't waste octogenarians

*Elaine Sommers Rich*

Christian education must change in two ways.

1. *Our congregations must provide more materials and opportunities for people over 65.* According to Martha Graber of the Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, 22 percent of the members of the General Conference Mennonite Church are now over 65; 43 percent are over 50. The fastest growing group of older people is those over 85.

In our Sunday school classes are people who have studied the Bible for 70 or 80 years. We must provide study materials that challenge them to continued spiritual growth and that enable them to meet a whole new set of circumstances. We need Bible study materials that help people cope with fears of becoming dependent on others or of running out of money. We need biblical resources to help them adjust to diminishing prowess—whether of energy, eyesight or hearing.

Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925) once sent these words along with the present of a Bible to his niece, "I am so glad to give you this really beautiful edition of the Greek New Testament—doubtless the greatest book, or rather collection of writings, extant among mankind. I am now in my 70th year, and

# Population changes and the Sunday school

*Leland Harder*

How are our Sunday schools affected by changes in General Conference churches?

**Table 1. Percent of GC congregations in five age categories:**

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-9 | 22.1 | 16.8 | 13.6 |
| 10-19 | 16.7 | 20.7 | 15.6 |
| 20-29 | 13.7 | 14.3 | 17.8 |
| 30-64 | 37.7 | 36.3 | 37.8 |
| 65 + | 9.8 | 11.8 | 15.0 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 99.9 | 99.8 |
| Number | 61,751 | 68,712 | 58,016 |
| Median age | 28.2 | 28.1 | 32.1 |

Note in Table 1 that the ages of our members have been shifting during the past 20 years. We have fewer children, more people in their 20s and more members in the retirement years. We know from other studies (see *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later*, chapter 16) that these age groups respond differently to the ministries of the church.

Children and teenagers score highest on regularity of church and Sunday school attendance. They readily imbibe

*Is this how the biblical grandmother Lois passed the faith on to Timothy?*

I have in no wise exhausted these writings for my outlook, my strengthening, my practice, every day and hour."

In A.D. 155 at a festival of Caesar a number of Christians were put into a stadium to fight wild beasts. Beloved old Bishop Polycarp was led out. The proconsul said to him, "Swear and I will release you; curse the Christ!" Polycarp said, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" The proconsul threatened him with wild beasts and then with fire. Polycarp replied, "Bring what you will." As he spoke these words he was described as "filled with courage and joy; and his countenance was full of grace . . . the proconsul was astonished."

Aletha Grenfall (1829-1923) at age 90 composed this prayer: "I come to thee for help to meet the trials of advancing years. Give me courage and patience to bear the infirmities, privations and loneliness of old age. Help me to fight successfully its temptations to be exacting, selfish, unreasonable, irritable and

*GC demographics tell us that the circles of youngsters keep growing smaller in our churches.*

the faith transmitted to them, although its meaning for them is conditioned by their own temperament, imagination and the sincerity (or insincerity) of their parents and teachers.

The transition of the later teens and 20s is characterized by a certain degree of reaction, as they are simultaneously taught by our culture to question authority and as they struggle to make the secondhand faith their own.

Interest in preserving the faith returns after marriage and the arrival of children with its concern to give them the benefits of the religious nurture the parents had in their formative years. From then through the middle years, most people feel the need for a firm faith orientation.

Another period of doubt and anxiety comes when a middle-aged person senses the essential brevity of this life in relation to all the unfulfilled dreams and self-identities. A major crisis occurs at about age 65, when retirement from gainful employment sends a worker

complaining. Preserve my mental faculties unimpaired to the end, keep my heart and affections warm, so that I may never fail to sympathize with the joys, sorrows and interests of others, and to be deeply grateful for the love and forbearance of those around me."

The great Japanese Kanzo Uchimura said that before he became a Christian one of the things which most amazed him about the faith was the astonishing way older Christians still looked forward with hope.

**Let's not waste the octogenarians.** In the congregation to which I belong one of the most appreciated Sunday school teachers is 87. An 88-year-old member has recently expressed concern about the term "Holy Ghost" in the *Gloria Patri.* He has urged us to use "Holy Spirit" in order that outdated language not create a barrier to understanding. He is still attempting to serve his congregation. His wife recently sang in "The Messiah" for the 52nd consecutive time. Do our Christian programs utilize the skills and wisdom of people in their 80s and 90s?

2. *Our congregations must do a superb job of educating children.* The population pyramid has turned upside down. Families used to have 8, 10 or 12 children. Now a family of five or more children is rare. Two or three is the norm. In the past, half the children who came up through a Sunday school could leave the church and that church could still have sizable membership. No more.

Each child has always been precious in the sight of God. But now that value increases in view of the future of the church. When God wants an important thing done in the world or a wrong righted, God does not do it with trumpets blaring out of Ottawa and Washington. God has a baby born to godly parents. Jesus' coming is the prime example. Christian homes and congregations are the frontline of history.

Only the best is good enough for these children: the best parenting, the best teaching, the best music and art, the best curriculum. Paul wrote to Timothy, "From childhood you have known the sacred Scriptures that are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

Recently a church council was working on its budget. Where could expenses be reduced? Someone suggested that not buying the new revised Foundation Series curriculum materials for the children could provide quite a cut. Which is more important—a roof that does not leak or a topnotch Christian education program for the children? (I hope that one need not exclude the other.) Babies and children do not vote on church boards. Therefore every adult must become an advocate for the welfare of children.

Children are constantly undervalued and placed at the bottom of priority lists. I remember a woman who made 85 telephone calls to get one summer Bible school teacher. Recently in our area of the Central District we had an evening of excellent workshops. Out of the over 1,000 members of area Mennonite churches, only two attended one of these special workshops.

Do we really mean it when we read together No. 729 in *The Mennonite Hymnal* at the dedication of a child: "We accept with humility of spirit and seriousness of purpose our responsibility for the spiritual well-being of this child"?

Perhaps people feel guilty when they put money into their church budget for Christian education of children. Perhaps they think, "We should be sending this money far away to the foreign mission field; that is surely a holier cause."

home to leisure pursuits for which one is ill-prepared.

A Sunday school curriculum that fails to measure these recesses and bulges in the age pyramid and to adapt to the particular needs caused by the aging process will be important in its task of discipling all age groups.

**Table 2. Percent of GC members in place-of-residence categories:**

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Farm | 37.9 | 29.9 | 22.2 |
| Rural non-farm | 8.2 | 11.1 | 11.5 |
| Town/city | 53.9 | 59.0 | 66.3 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number | 28,479 | 34,910 | 31,629 |

Note in Table 2 that the proportions in three place-of-residence categories have been shifting away from the farm to towns and cities. An educational challenge, to the rural churches from which

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*Let's give children's education the priority it properly deserves.*

Is it ever wrong to care first for our own households? Joseph and Mary did. Grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice did. Caring well for one's own household is listed in 2 Timothy as a qualification for a church leader. Do we want to be like the woman "so busy raising money for starving children in Booroodegore that she had neither time nor money for her own"? Paradoxically but fortunately, homes and congregations that do a good job of nurture usually do a good job with outreach.

**Appreciate your workers.** Congregations need to express appreciation to children's and youth workers. One church has a "gratitude banquet" for Sunday school teachers each spring. It can be discouraging to work hard with a children's or youth group, perhaps a choir, week after week and feel that not another person in the congregation either knows or cares. Perhaps Sunday school teachers should be paid. (Do you pay your minister?) At the least they should be thanked. •

*The "non-ethnic" Mennonites can teach us how to go and make disciples of all nations.*

they come and to the urban fellowships where more mobile members get involved, is to take seriously Jeremiah's admonition to "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremish 29:7).

**Table 3. Percent of GC members in school-years-completed categories:**

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than grade 12 | 58.1 | 49.7 | 31.6 |
| Grade 12 | 23.6 | 25.3 | 29.7 |
| Some college | 9.7 | 11.8 | 15.3 |
| College graduate | 8.7 | 8.3 | 15.3 |
| Postgraduate | 8.7 | 4.9 | 8.0 |
| Total percent | 100.1 | 100.0 | 99.9 |
| Number | 31,938 | 35,590 | 32,500 |
| Median school years completed | 10.4 | 12.0 | 12.6 |

Note in Table 3 that a greater part of our church membership is attending and graduating from college and doing postgraduate study. Increasingly they demand a Sunday school curriculum which gives them more options for enrolling in alternative courses related to a more comprehensive study of the Bible in relation to what it means to follow Christ in a thermonuclear age.

**Table 4. Percent of GC members from non-Mennonite parentage:**

| | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mennonite parentage | 91.5 | 91.7 | 89.8 |
| Non-Mennonite parentage | 8.5 | 8.3 | 10.2 |
| Total percent | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Number | 40,995 | 46,190 | 41,859 |

Table 4 shows us one demographic statistic that has hardly changed at all in the past 20 years. It is an important index for proper study of the adult Foundation Series book *Sharing the Gospel.* We can say that *only* 10.2 percent of our congregations are composed of people from non-Mennonite ethnic sources, or we can say that *fully* 10.2 percent are so composed (a total of 4,272 people between 1970 and 1980 in 195 reporting churches). With either perspective, we need to learn more about the nature of our Lord's mandate to "go forth therefore and make all nations my disciples" (Matthew 28:18, NEB).

*Demographic trends are both a comfort and a challenge as we continue to improve the teaching ministries of our churches.*

Demographic trends are both a comfort and challenge as we continue to improve the teaching ministries of our churches. The elders among us are gifted resources. Members moving to the cities are our missionaries. The college-educated can help us become the "hermeneutical communities of faith" that our seminaries envision. And our "non-ethnic" Mennonites can teach us how to go and make disciples of all nations. We can realize this potential only as we teach in the clear light of these realities. •

*It feels good for seniors to know they don't have to go to a "home." With the help of Good Neighbors, many can live independently in their own apartments.*

# Good Neighbors is there

*Carolyn Prieb*

After 76-year-old Margaret Esponito spent nine months in the hospital for amputations of both feet, her sister said she should move into a convalescent home. She refused, "I'd rather jump out my (11th floor) window. I know what they're like, I used to work in them. They smell like urine. You have no privacy."

Without feet, she needs assistance to be independent. She has hired Randy Neufeld, co-founder of Good Neighbors. "What I can't do I have Randy do." Randy cleans the refrigerator, mops the floor, does odd jobs and reaches for items on the top shelf.

Kate Reiser lives down the hall in the same building. She needed someone to dust, vacuum and scrub, and was referred to Randy by a city social service agency. "I wouldn't want anyone else," she said of Randy.

*Susan Geil and Randy Neufeld are co-founders of Good Neighbors, a service to seniors who can no longer do everything for themselves.*

Randy Neufeld and Susan Geil, married only a year last July, are the co-founders of Good Neighbors, a unique service-oriented business they operate from their home on the near north side of Chicago. Good Neighbors is as much a lifestyle as it is a business. It enables Randy and Susan to provide a needed service to seniors, remain in the low-income tax range, earn enough money to pay the rent, put more-with-less menus on the dinner table and still have enough time to be active in social and political activities they care about.

Randy and Susan co-founded Good Neighbors in the fall of 1982, just after Susan completed a two-year term in Mennonite Voluntary Service as a social worker sponsored by the Lake View Presbyterian Church. This experience gave Susan exposure to issues many senior citizens face as they adjust to the increasing physical limitations coming to them with age. Many seniors are forced to make changes in their self-sufficient lifestyles; usually this means they can no longer do all the vacuuming, reach the cans on the top shelf or make the trips to the laundromat. They still desire their independence but need some help.

"The rich can pay for professional services, the very poor are eligible for government funds, but the lower middle-income person can't afford decent care. Good Neighbors makes available services to the lower-income person who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford adequate care."

Randy sites Mrs. Hein as an example. "Mrs. Hein receives $200 a month. She pays $60 rent for her subsidized apartment. We work for her about five hours a month and she pays us $20. We do enough to keep her apartment clean, which is what she needs to stay independent."

Randy had the inspiration for the business. His dream was to be "a part of a labor-intensive, low-capital, community-oriented business."

After brainstorming with friends, buying index cards, a telephone answering machine, designing and Xeroxing a couple hundred 5x5 handbills and informing contacts in the social service system, the telephone began ringing with requests for Good Neighbors.

Good Neighbors now serves about 50 clients, some regular and some occasional. Sharon Groff and Jay Stackhouse are also now working for Good Neighbors. Others have taken one or two regular jobs or assist with one-time heavy moving or painting jobs. Someone in Hyde Park heard about Good Neighbors, consulted with Randy and Susan, and started a similar organization.

Randy and Susan have made a conscious decision to work only 20 hours a week. Limiting their hours allows them freedom to volunteer for activities they feel are important. Randy works as a draft counselor at the Midwest Committee for Military Counseling, he campaigns for his candidates, both Randy and Susan volunteer at Plowshares, an MCC self-help shop, and Susan works at a neighborhood church thrift shop.

Randy and Susan both attended Mennonite colleges. Randy graduated from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., and Susan graduated from Pacific College, Fresno, Calif. When asked why they chose their lifestyle in the city, Randy replied, "There are no longer any frontiers left to us, places for us to explore. The city is the new frontier."

Randy and Susan state together, "This lifestyle is the only one that makes sense to us."

If any of us in Chicago ever had any fear, we certainly don't need to now, because as Randy says with a twinkle in his eye, "Like State Farm, Good Neighbors is there." •

# Wisdom is divine and human

*Lois Barrett*

Wisdom, the goal of Christian education, has both a divine and a human face in Proverbs 8:1-9:12.

**The human face.** Wisdom is personified as a woman who goes out along the highways and to the city gate—the place of local political decision making in Israelite society—to invite all humankind to learn of her teaching.

In Proverbs 8 that teaching involves first of all truth. There is no wickedness or falsehood in her mouth. She is straightforward and honest. She does not speak with twisted words—no double talk. Those who already have understanding know what Wisdom says is true.

Wisdom lives with prudence; she has knowledge and discretion. She hates evil, pride, arrogance, evil behavior and lying speech.

Wisdom possesses good advice, sound judgment, perception and strength.

She walks in the way of righteousness and justice. By her justice, rulers are to govern. They are to model their laws after her justice.

To know Wisdom is to act with justice and to live humbly and truthfully.

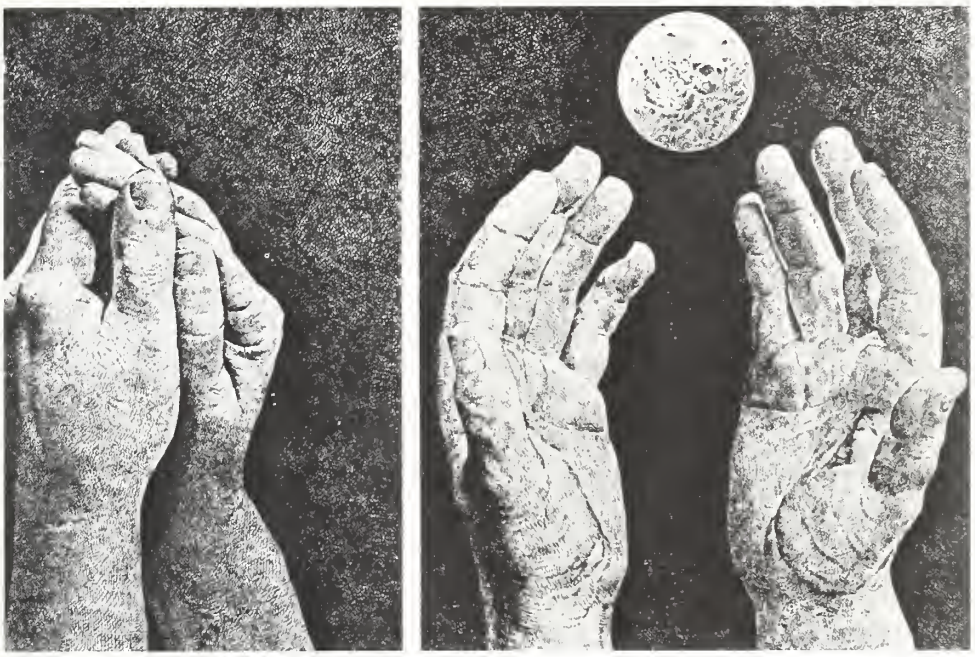
**The divine face.** Wisdom also has a divine face. In verses 22-31, Wisdom is with God at the beginning of creation. The Hebrew verb at the beginning of verse 22 [*qanah*] is often translated as "The Lord possessed me" (NIV) or "The Lord created me" (RSV). But it could also be translated, "The Lord paid the bride price for me," that is, "The Lord married me," since the same verb is regularly used in Hebrew for the making of the marriage contract. Just as the metaphor of marriage is used in Hosea to designate the closeness of the relationship between God and Israel, here the metaphor of marriage is used to illustrate the closeness of the nature of God and Wisdom.

Before the world was created, says Proverbs 8, Wisdom was there with God.

Wisdom is so intimately a part of God that one cannot conceive of God without this Wisdom who is truth and justice and the knowledge of them.

The idea is repeated in the first chapter of John. The Word is said to have been in the beginning with God and to have participated in creation with God. That Word, says John, is Jesus.

Jesus is again identified with Wisdom in Luke 21:15, where Jesus promises his followers words and wisdom when they are brought before the authorities. In the parallel passage in Matthew 10:16-20, Wisdom is identified with the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 11:19, Wisdom is used to refer to Jesus, who, like Wisdom and her messengers, is rejected by humanity (compare Luke 7:35).



*Before the world was created, says Proverbs 8, Wisdom was there with God.*

What is said of Wisdom in Proverbs is said of the Law in the Psalms and elsewhere. In Psalm 119, God's laws give understanding to the simple (verse 130) and are righteous and true (verses 137, 142). God's Word is eternal (verses 89, 160); those who do God's law act with righteousness and justice (verse 121). Like the Word, the Spirit and the Law, Wisdom is the constant companion of God and is associated with the nature of God. Whoever finds Wisdom finds life (Proverbs 8:35).

*"Wisdom extends her invitation to feast on knowing the truth and on doing justice."*

In this passage of Proverbs, the description of Wisdom ends with an invitation. Wisdom builds herself a house. She prepares a meal. Then she and her maidservants go out to call all who are ignorant to a banquet. "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. Leave your folly and you will live; walk in the way of understanding." Like the man in Jesus' parable who sends his servants out to the streets and the alleys to invite everyone to his banquet (Luke 14:15-24), Wisdom also invites all to come to her banquet, recognizing that there are competing invitations and commitments from Folly (see Proverbs 9:13-18). But "blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (Luke 14:15).

Wisdom extends her invitation to feast on knowing the truth and doing justice.

*Lois Barrett, 1508 Fairview, Wichita, KS 67203, assisted in editing the COE articles for this special issue. She is a free-lance writer and mentor at Mennonite Church of the Servant in Wichita.*

# Talking and listening with love

*Randy and Myrna Krehbiel*

"We just don't communicate anymore," a father laments. "My son and I used to be close until he found those new friends in high school."

"He doesn't communicate anymore," a wife complains. "He just comes up and flops down in front of the TV."

A pastor describes congregational conflict, "They simply are not communicating."

Some union grievance officials have said that up to 85 percent of grievances filed could have been avoided if supervisors and employees had talked to each other. Frequently we assume that we aren't communicating. On the contrary, we *are* communicating. Our tone of voice, posture, a nod, gesture, a facial change, a smile, eye contact—all this communicates constantly. Human beings have the special gift of speech to make our communication more obvious and more accurate.

"We cannot *not* communicate," say authors Watzlawick, et al (*Pragmatics of Human Communication*), "but most of us could talk more accurately." "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits" (Proverbs 18:21). Building up relationships is possible especially if we pay attention not only to *what* we say, but also to *how* we say it.

We seldom stop to see how we talk. We tend to spin in the same cycle of act—react, provoke—attack, complain—defend, talk—not listen. We can stop the spin cycle, open our communication machine, and look at our talking laundry. This is not airing our dirty linen; it is looking at ways to get the laundry cleaner, to communicate more accurately. There is no magic cleanser, no simple and easy no-work answer.

*Guidelines:*
*—Tune in and listen to myself*
*—Speak for myself*
*—Listen attentively, lovingly*
*—I can choose how I talk*
*—I can choose to value myself and others*

The first skill is to learn how to simply **stop the cycle.** "I don't feel very good about how I keep saying the same thing louder and louder. I'm getting angry. My stomach feels lousy. I want to stop this." To stop the cycle doesn't mean to control the other person. Speaking for self is crucial, we talk about our own intent to change. We invite the partner, son or friend to join us in discussing how we talk, how we're coming across. "It hurts to hear you sound so angry. I start to clam up when I think you're getting angry." We stop the spin cycle, not by pointing out others' faults, but by speaking for and about ourselves.

**Self-truth.** Paul, in Ephesians 4:15, challenges us to "speak the truth in love." But how can we speak the truth when we aren't aware of what is going on inside of our own selves? We spend much time interpreting what others are thinking and then making sure they agree that we know what they are thinking. We work so hard for agreement that we often bypass understanding each other. We assume that to communicate we must be in agreement, forgetting how different each of us is. Agreement is often not essential. But without working toward understanding, relationships collapse.

To get at what is inside, each of us must take responsibility to "know thyself." Take time to listen to yourself. Christ often went away to be by himself and with God. Contemplative thought and prayer is not only cleansing and refreshing, it gives one new information to bring to our talking with others. If we look honestly inside ourselves at our feelings, thoughts, wants and actions, we will have information we can then report accurately to others.

**Take time to listen.** Listening to others is a basic communication skill. Proverbs 18:13 tells us to listen before we answer. We are often practicing our next speech, listening with one ear and thinking of something else with the mind. Choosing to listen attentively, to give our full attention to spouse, son, daughter or a fellow believer, is a precious gift to the other. Clayton Barbeau, Catholic psychologist, in his film series "Creating Family" says that to take time to listen is a way of laying down our life for another.

Listening is work. It demands choice to spend the time now, turn off the TV, to not go to the board meetings. Barbeau continues, "Where I put my time I put my life, and where I put my life I put my love." Christ's style often was not just to tell, but to ask, "What do you think?" listen carefully and then treat the answer with respect. At the age of 12 Jesus was already listening carefully and asking questions (Luke 2:46).

**Asking questions.** "He never answers my question." Well, are we asking questions that *can* be answered? Do our questions give the other person the room to answer? Frequently we use questions as ways to probe, to analyze, to find out. Our style puts the other on the defensive. Our questions demand justification for their position.

Scripture counsels that our style of relating to others is important. "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). Speak in love, or your words are nothing but a noisy gong or clanging

*Speak accurately and listen effectively. Work toward understanding.*

cymbal, says 1 Corinthians 13:1. Paul accepts that we will have angry feelings (Ephesians 4:26), but counsels us not to let anger lead us into sin. John says our love should not just be "words and talk" but also action (1 John 3:18). Questions that invite the other to tell what's inside, without fear of reprisal or ridicule, are loving action. Love becomes action when our questions attempt to clarify and understand rather than to force agreement. "Would you tell me more about that? What are your feelings about that? When you hit your brother, how did you feel?" Questions are loving also when they back off, are quiet and simply listen.

**Communication and meta-communication**
We are always communicating—acting and reacting.

Step outside the circle to meta-communicate:
Talk about how we talk.
Talk about how we make decisions.
Talk about our relationship.

**Your attitude is showing.** Our talk reflects our attitude toward ourselves and toward others. It also shows our relationship with God.

Scripture repeatedly urges that we speak in love (Ephesians 4, Proverbs 18, 1 Corinthians 13, Proberbs 15). The Bible recognizes all our feelings, but says our feelings and our actions (words) can be separated. We do not have to act out our feelings. Once aware of our feelings, we can choose to talk lovingly and to behave with care and concern toward ourselves and others. Though we temporarily feel bad about our spouse, son, etc., we can choose to treat the other with respect.

Just a lot of humanist hooey, you say? Proverbs 16:23 challenges us, "The mind of the wise makes his speech judicious, and adds persuasiveness to his lips." The writer seems to urge us to learn communication skills. These can help us toward better understanding and effective conflict resolution.

**Right now.** But what can I do right now? Stop, listen and look at the person with whom you want to communicate more effectively. Create time for people. Speak accurately and listen effectively. Work toward understanding. Stop demanding agreement except where agreement is absolutely necessary. Ask questions that love, support and respect. Avoid questions that demand justification, that back others into "Why?" corners. Take time to understand yourself. Set aside time to pray, meditate and communicate more accurately with God. Be alone sometimes to do this. A daily routine could be helpful.

Finally, be kind to yourself. Habits are hard to change. Communication is a process. Work at it a bit each day. Set goals to spend even five minutes more each day with your spouse, son, daughter, or parent in listening and talking. Take a class or attend a weekend seminar such as Couple Communication, Mennonite Marriage Encounter, Marriage Enrichment, Family Enrichment—Understanding or Parent Effectiveness Training. Read a book. Ask for help. As a fellowship of believers, we all can learn from and support each other as we work to communicate more effectively.

Many of the ideas above have become part of the writers' thoughts, but special credit goes to Sherod Miller, et al, *Talking Together*, for helping us toward these ideas.

The writers would like to hear from those of you with communication concerns. If you teach a class in communication or want to participate in one, please contact us. Also, we'd like to hear your questions, concerns and ideas. Please share your ideas about possible aids and programs to improve communication in congregations and families. Write to us at: *Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

*Randy and Myrna Krehbiel are COE secretaries for family life education.*

**Ambikapur, India**—"The month of December 1983 was a very busy one for us," wrote P. K. Ram, evangelist with the Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church, in a recent report. "I, with my evangelistic staff, visited all the Mennonite Christian villages. We sang, preached, danced and celebrated Thanksgiving and communion services. We experienced God's rich blessings in our church. Twenty-nine people were baptized in five villages."

**A Pennsylvania appeals court** has unanimously overturned the convictions of Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan and seven others for a nuclear missile protest at a General Electric plant and ordered the original trial judge not to participate further in the case. The unanimous order for a new trial for the "Plowshares Eight" was based on the exclusion of the public during jury selection by Montgomery County Judge Samuel Salus II. By a 4-3 vote, the state superior court panel also upheld the Plowshares defendants' right to present a justification defense.

# NEWS

## Perspective '84: 'The status quo must go'

Minneapolis—Nearly 300 people from across Canada and the United States assembled here Feb. 16-19 for Perspective '84, the first General Conference-sponsored young adult conference. Participants were challenged with four days of singing, Bible studies, special lectures and workshops urging them to become active partners in promoting the new creation in Christ (based on 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 as the theme).

Building on the thesis that Christians are people whose lives are a response to God's grace, Perry Yoder, professor of religion and Bible at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., said that Christians are called to transform the world even as their own lives have been made new. God's saving act should permeate all of the Christian's actions, enabling him or her to build redemptive justice (righteousness) in social structures and meet the inner needs of people, he said.

Yoder added that the term "new creation" implies that Christians evaluate all things from a new perspective. People, power and success are seen from the dimension of the cross. The status quo must go. All things, including structures, must yield to the model of Jesus.

Christians are servants for redemptive justice, bringing about a righteousness (justice) that exceeds that of the Pharisees, Yoder said. "New creation justice" recognizes that God owns all that Christians are now using and that resources are shared among all people in the world. It is an economics of redemptive justice for all rather than massive wealth for a few.

Virginia Mollenkott, professor of English at William Paterson College in Wayne, N.J., and author of several books, began her lectures with a look at the U.S. scene (she excused herself from having data about Canada, even though half of the people present were Canadians). She painted a graphic picture about such social dilemmas as woman abuse in the home (one every 1-3 minutes) and rape (one every 2-5 minutes).

Mollenkott moved quickly toward challenging her audience toward a new, inclusive consciousness. The gospel has too long been promoted as intrinsically masculine, thereby disenfranchising over half of humanity, she said.

To celebrate the new creation in Christ, said Mollenkott, it is essential to let go of the half-gods which want to subordinate and oppress the powerless, including minorities such as homosexuals. We must allow God to make us into whole people who show deference and respect for others because of God's prior claim on their lives, rather than people who discriminate against others because of sex differences.

*Yoder (left) and Mollenkott: attacking systemic and societal injustice*

Although evangelism does require words, Mollenkott noted that Christ is most effectively shared through a lifestyle lit up by God's love. God, in love, accepts *all* people and wants to set people fully free. Whenever Christians fall into the dominance/submission/manipulation game begun by Adam and Eve in Eden (Genesis 3), they become afraid of their nakedness (vulnerability) and grab for leaves (protection and defensiveness), she said.

This new evangelism begins with a deliberate choice to join in God's goodness, Mollenkott said. This means accepting liberation from all bondage and accepting Christ's power in one's being. It means defining "family" as all who choose to be part of this new creation covenant. Men and women become equal partners whose right relationship with God is reflected by building right relationships with all people.

Mollenkott concluded that the world view of today's Christians must become truly transnational. The Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer must be spoken in global terms. Hope for the new creation begins best in individual believers when they pray, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief."

A total of 12 workshops were offered and repeated between plenary sessions. The workshop on "sexual expressions," led by Elsie Steelberg of Wadsworth, Ohio, was most in demand. Steelberg opened her workshop with a statement about the goodness of sexuality and with some guidelines for sexual expression.

**First Mennonite Church, Hillsboro, Kan.,** will celebrate its centennial March 16-18. In March 1884 the home mission committee of the Western Conference sent J. S. Hirschler to Hillsboro to organize a congregation among the diverse group of Mennonites who had moved to town. The congregation will present a historical drama Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. On Sunday the main speaker will be Ted Koontz, assistant professor of ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. His morning topic will be "The People of God: Looking Back," and his evening topic, "The People of God: Looking Ahead."

**Evangelical Christian leaders** have warned of mass tax resistance by their churches unless Congress amends the new Social Security law which requires religious organizations to pay into the system. The church groups issued the warnings at a Dec. 14, 1983, hearing of the Senate Finance Committee, called in response to a storm of protest over the provision in the new Social Security rescue package, which went into effect Jan. 1. The revised law repeals the exemption on non-profit groups, including churches, from withholding Social Security taxes from their employees.

**A drastic rise in pornography** has led to sharp increases in woman and child abuse in Israel, says the Jewish feminist magazine *Lilith*. In a report called "Porn in the Promised Land," mass media specialist Judith Bat-Ada quotes psychologists and others who say that pornography triggers rape, wife battery, incest and other forms of sexual violence. Israeli police statistics show a 45 percent increase in reported rapes since pornography became popular. A rape crisis center in Tel Aviv reports that younger women are being victimized by rape.

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Calling for a lifestyle based on a total commitment to God (Mark 12:29-30) and respect for other people (Mark 12:31), she said that with this foundation, sexual expression can be exercised to the point of sexual intimacy when two people covenant themselves to such a quality relationship. Each of her sessions became animated with interaction.

The second most attended workshop was Walt Friesen's on "intimacy and individuation." Friesen shared with his group about the pilgrimage of the inward journey, which he said helps a person become freer about one's intimacy and identity.

Church agencies such as Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Voluntary Service and the Commission on Overseas Mission as well as church schools, communications and home ministries programs offered "service" workshops. They were open to all people interested to discuss opportunities for service.

Plenary question periods evidenced a deep impact made by the call to become active partners in building the new creation. Some participants asked for resources and other "handles" to follow up. Others promised to take the challenge home to their churches.

*Walt Friesen of Denver leads a workshop on intimacy and individuation.*

*Patty Shelly (right) accompanies an interpretive dance group during worship.*

Several reflected frustration about the immensity of the task. A few expressed serious reservations about what was implied in the statements of speakers. Even though there seemed general agreement that "the status quo must go," some called for care and respect for those good things that do exist in the churches.

Sunday morning closing exercises included a statement from a group of women expressing appreciation for affirmation of the feminine dimensions of God. Three people shared that the conference had a profound impact in their inner journey toward wholeness in Christ. The communion service invited groups of people to come to the table of the Lord together to break bread, drink of the cup and share expressions of mutual inclusiveness. The conference closed as participants formed an "inclusive circle," walked around the room, embraced and sang. The last song was "New creation coming . . . alleluia."

*Bernie Wiebe*

**Members of Bethel Mennonite Church,** Winnipeg, approved a proposal on Jan. 23 to sponsor a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit in their city. A voluntary service committee is working to negotiate service positions in the core area of Winnipeg with the goal of establishing a unit of four volunteers by this fall. The proposed unit will be the first MVS unit in Canada's western provinces. The two other MVS units in Canada are located in St. Catharines, Ont., and Hamilton, Ont.

**"Preaching and the Use of Storytelling"** is the name of a Great Plains Seminary course this spring which began Feb. 7 at the Hesston (Kan.) Mennonite Church. Tom Shane, community chaplain at the Prairie View Mental Health Center in Newton, Kan., teaches the course, which is divided into two parts. The weekly sessions to the end of March will study the style, theology, appeal and target audiences of selected media preachers, movies and TV programs. In April and May the students will make their own presentations in class.

**Arnold Synder,** associate professor of history at Bluffton (Ohio) College, his wife, Linda, and their four children, left Feb. 10 for Nicaragua. There they plan to work for 10 months with the Witness for Peace project. The purpose of Witness for Peace, according to the WFP Statement of Purpose, is to develop a "prayerful, biblically based community of U.S. citizens who stand with the Nicaraguan people by acting in continuous non-violent resistance to U.S. overt intervention in their country." "The non-violent resistance which is being carried out at the moment," says Snyder, "consists in maintaining a continuous presence at the Nicaraguan town of Jalapa."

# Ontario conference favors more inter-Mennonite cooperation

Leamington, Ont.—While making little headway on the perennial issue of support for students enrolled in regional Mennonite high schools, delegates to the Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario annual sessions here Feb. 24-26 underscored their commitment to inter-Mennonite unity.

The conference gave strong assent to a resolution asking its executive committee to "explore new ways of cooperation with our two sister conferences—the Western Ontario Mennonite Churches and the Mennonite Churches of Ontario and Quebec."

The statement further recommended that the executive committee "seek new ways to express structurally the unity that we have experienced for years" by attempting to "simplify our structures" and doing "our church building together, so that the world may know that we are one."

The committee was asked to "consider increased sharing of conference staff persons" and to report back to the 1986 conference with strategies for implementing these concerns.

Brought to delegates by the resolutions committee, the statement was spurred by the acceptance of Valleyview Mennonite Church, London, as a "co-affiliate" of the conference—a kind of membership described as being more symbolic than realistic in terms of support of conference program. Valleyview will retain its primary affiliation with WOMC, while giving a token financial contribution to CUMCO each year.

One tangible expression of the commitment to more inter-Mennonite coordination was approval by delegates for the transfer of responsibility for the annual Sunday school convention to the province's Inter-Mennonite Board of Congregational Resources. Meanwhile, an inter-Mennonite regional Bible conference is scheduled for Rockway Mennonite School, Kitchener, on May 5.

While making good progress on inter-church relations, delegates failed to untangle the knot of how to fairly support students from the conference who attend Mennonite high schools.

Since the establishment of United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, by the conference in the 1940s, CUMCO has included an annual sum for UMEI in its budget. Soon after, however, concern arose about how the conference might express support for its students at other church schools in the province like Rockway and Eden Christian College, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Those two schools have primary relationships with the Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Brethren, respectively.

At present, CUMCO budgets an annual sum ($18,000 in 1984) for UMEI, but offers only student aid to its students at the other schools.

The executive committee came to this year's sessions with a recommendation to use these student assistance funds "to pay the schools directly," thereby "making concrete our commitment to these two schools in addition to UMEI." The measure failed, however, frustrating those wanting to enlarge relationships with Eden and Rockway.

Dave Kroeker, Rockway Mennonite Church delegate, suggested that the conference again "look at new ways of approaching equitable assistance" to students of all the church schools. That passed.

In other actions, delegates approved the sale of the old Welcome Inn facility in Hamilton and the purchase of the former Eastwood Baptist Church several blocks away, to become Welcome Inn's new home. Funds for the $90,000 purchase will come from various sources.

Paul and Linda Dueck, conference youth workers, were applauded on several occasions—including one standing ovation—for their keen leadership of the church's youth over the past four years. The Duecks will leave this summer for a two-year assignment in Asuncion, Paraguay, under the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission.

Delegates approved a budget of $307,300 for 1984, up 9 percent from a year earlier. The 1985 conference will be held at the Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church. *Larry Cornies*


## Youth pastor needed

Wanted: full-time youth pastor for **Foothills Mennonite Church**, Calgary. Interested in promoting Anabaptist principles.

Send resumes to: Dick Hiebert
116 Varsity Estates Grove N.W.
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# COMMENTS

## TAIWAN: A Spared Life

In March of 1967 several young boys in the town of Kuang-fu were playing around a narrow guage railroad train whose flatbed cars were loaded with sugarcane stalks. They were trying to pull a few stalks loose to chew on. Suddenly the train began to move, and one of them, Cheng Chin-Sheng, a 13-year-old boy, tripped and fell under the train, sustaining a severe crushing injury to his right forearm and left thigh. Tourniquets were applied, and he was transported to the Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hwalien, about 35 miles away. Upon arrival there, he was extremely pale from blood loss and in critical condition. After transfusion, Dr. Brown amputated the destroyed limbs, and Chin-Sheng gradually recovered from the immediate effects of his injury.

After his wounds were well healed, the hospital staff tried to convince Chin-Sheng to have a prosthesis fitted, but he preferred the use of a crutch and learned to get around very well. At 13 he had not finished primary school, and his parents did not send him back, feeling that with his handicaps, there was no point of sending him to school anymore. Chin-Sheng just lived at home, whiling away the time.

After about two years, in one of his contacts with hospital personnel, Chin-Sheng mentioned that he would like to have a job. So in 1969, Elder Chen of the Meilun Mennonite Church, who is a painter by profession, took him on as an apprentice. Mr. Chen taught him drawing, carving, painting, and how to write Chinese characters. Being a smart boy and a hard worker, Chin-Sheng learned well. He also learned how to ride a bicycle and could frequently be seen riding his bicycle up and down the street to and from places where he was painting. Since his right arm was amputated below the elbow, he could use the crook of the elbow to hold the paint bucket while he painted with his left hand. As a daring young man he enjoyed hopping around up high on scaffolding, painting the outside of buildings. Sometimes this bamboo scaffolding would be as much as six stories high when they were painting the outside of hotels or other taller buildings.

In 1976 Chin-Sheng was elected as an outstanding

**Continued on page 2**

*Mr. Chin-Sheng with his family in Dr. Roland Brown's office*

## UPPER VOLTA: A New Frontier

"Cheba is a Christian! . . . Maybe you can imagine our joy in having our best friend, a young, respected man, the son of a village leader, become a Christian. It was over the past two months that he decided to follow our way to God, though he understood so little about it. But this past weekend he went with us to the evangelism campaign our teammates were holding in Orodara. There he heard preaching by other young African men and understood a lot more about Jesus' way to God, and made a definite public decision.

"The confrontation between Cheba's new life and village life was not long in coming. Only hours after we got back to Kotoura, his older brother called him over to help sacrifice a ram. Cheba feels his aloneness as the first Senufo Christian in Kotoura, but he's not afraid to take his stand as different."

(A week later) "We have a prayer and singing time every morning around seven. In the evening a number of people come to read before supper. The after-supper time often turns into a time of teaching as Cheba reads and understands some new things and explains it to the others. Before everyone leaves at night we have a prayer time. Cheba is willing to teach, and willing to spend an hour a day himself studying with us so he can teach!" GAIL WIEBE

**Editor's note:** *Upper Volta has a Muslim population between 2 and 3 million. In the rich agricultural setting where COM/AIMM personnel are located, there is little understanding of the Christian faith. Under 2 percent of the entire population is Christian. COM is recruiting additional personnel to send to Upper Volta to be involved in the growing AIMM witness there.*

# BRAZIL: Ministry in the Favela

For most people in the Carangueijo favela in Recife, survival on a daily basis is the most pressing concern. But an awareness of foreign influence is illustrated by the questions of one of the street boys, "Why do Americans want to kill everybody? Are you an American?"

Dan and Rose Waltner Graber are COM personnel who have gone to Recife to bring a message of life, but realize the "guilt by association" that they carry as citizens of a country which threatens international security for the sake of its own national security. Their assignment of church planting and evangelism is building on the foundation laid by MCC workers since the 1960s. Dan will also be involved in MCC administration and development projects on a part-time basis.

In addition to Dan and Rose, leadership in the Carangueijo favela ministry is shared by nationals, Traudie and Rudolfo Ens and Josue, and MCC volunteer community worker, Jeannine Ewert. There are youth services on Saturday evenings, evening worship on Sunday, and Sunday school for children aged three to twelve. Bible school activities are planned for the summer months. There also are plans for a midweek Bible study group that will meet in various homes in the favela.

During the past year the group has been meeting in a small house in the favela. At first only two adults and five youth attended on a regular basis. Attendance would increase greatly following invitations and visitation, but numbers would again decline rapidly. Faithfulness is a difficult concept for these people who live from hand-to-mouth.

# CHINA: Reparations Funds in Action

All three resolutions made in 1982 for use of "China Reparations" funds have been implemented. The China Educational Exchange (CEE) program, which provides English teachers and medical personnel for China, received $10,000. Herta Funk, a member of the General Conference, is presently teaching in Chengdu. Dr. John and Jeanne Zook plan to participate in the medical exchange in May 1984.

A variety of books, mostly from an Anabaptist perspective, were sent to Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in China. One thousand dollars has been sent for use as scholarships at the seminary. With the completion of a new five-story dormitory, the seminary will be able to accept another class of about 40 or more. Aside from the seminary there are three more junior theological seminaries operating in China. Preparations are being made in other cities to set up more training centers to meet the urgent needs of the church.

The balance of the reparations funds was used for the purchase of a church center for Mennonite Ministries in Hong Kong.

**TAIWAN: A Spared Life Continued from page 1**

handicapped person of Taiwan after the hospital Social Work Department had nominated him to the National Association of the Handicapped.

Chin-Sheng graduated from a bicycle to a motorcycle, which was fitted with controls for his limitations. In 1977 he decided to stride out on his own and start his own business. The first two or three times were not

*Mr. Chin-Sheng on the job*

successful, and in between he would return to his old boss, Mr. Chen, and work for him again.

In the past Chinese society has had a hard time accepting handicapped people. But because of his success, his story was written up in a number of newspapers at various times; consequently, many handicapped people wrote to him for advice, and he corresponded with them to encourage them and help them.

A high school girl on the other side of the island read Chin-Sheng's story and was very impressed with what the character of such a young man must be and began to correspond with him. This gradually developed into a romance, and they were married in 1982, despite her family's objection. Mr. Chin-Sheng is a member of the Amis tribe, whereas the young lady is of Taiwanese background.

Several years ago he was able to get a painting business started in his hometown and is continuing to paint there and has been successful enough to trade his motorcycle for a locally built four-wheel vehicle which can be used for hauling his painting equipment. He is a member of the Amis Presbyterian church there, but his wife has not become a Christian as yet.

This year Chin-Sheng was voted as one of the 10 outstanding young men in Taiwan. Considering that in the past this society has had difficulty knowing what to do with handicapped people, this is a real step forward. Part of the motivation in electing him was as encouragement to other handicapped people, but the competition was pretty stiff. Some of the others included the editor of a newspaper, administrator of a hospital, two professors, a mayor of a city, an artist, an agricultural specialist, and so on. He has frequently told news reporters during interviews that he is grateful to the Mennonite Christian Hospital for saving his life, and he has especially appreciated Miss Helen Willms and Rev. Tseng, one of the hospital chaplains, for their continued encouragement over the years.

ROLAND BROWN

# HONG KONG: A Second Congregation

Another frontier for COM in the '80s is Hong Kong. In this setting COM has joined the work of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in broadening the vision of the church there.

The priority of church planting and evangelism has resulted in a second congregation in recent months.

Twenty persons were present at the initial meetings in east Kowloon, but 11 or so continue to come on a regular basis. Building regulations limit the number of persons who can meet in a flat (private residence) to 20 persons.

Other visions for Mennonite Ministries in Hong Kong include a new outreach among the low-income workers and an Anabaptist witness to the larger church in Hong Kong.

# TRANSKEI: Not to Establish a Mennonite Church

Living in a rural black community, which is an exception rather than the rule for a white person, Larry Hills is involved in active Bible teaching ministry in Transkei. In southern Africa the Mennonites have been invited to be in partnership with the African Independent Churches. The invitation has been for Bible teachers rather than church planters.

Working in the Xhosa language, Larry teaches Bible through quarterly weekend conferences, weekly classes, one-day conferences, and informal opportunities.

Weekend conferences attract between 45 and 60 people. These conferences play the important role of bringing together people who are separated geographically for fellowship and to discuss mutual concerns. In areas which are too distant to permit weekly contact, one-day conferences allow some continuity.

Weekly classes on the parables, Genesis 1-11, and the kingdom of God have been held in three villages. The weekly classes provide ongoing, regular contact with AIC people and greater depth of study than can be provided at the less frequent weekend conferences.

Informal opportunities include funerals, worship services, feasts, all-night services, and baptisms. These are opportunities for teaching and participating in the life of the independent churches.

Larry has become aware of the opportunity to sell Christian literature such as Bible study materials, commentaries, devotional books, Bibles, songbooks, and children's books. He has sold well over 500 of these items.

To complement these ministries, Larry has created small study booklets for the parables, Genesis 1-11, and the Book of Acts. A series of children's books have been translated into Xhosa.

Larry's life and activities reflect his seminary training and background in Elementary Education.

*Joshua Chang at Sung Chiang Mennonite Church, Taipei, Taiwan. Joshua is completing his year of study at AMBS under the COM Overseas Church Leaders Study Program. His wife, Sophia, and their two children are also here.*

# BOLIVIA: Followers of Jesus

Tig and Karen Intagliata have spent their first year in Bolivia making inroads into both campo (rural) and urban settings. Tig will continue to visit some of the campo congregations on a regular basis, conduct leadership training classes, and assist with worship services. In the city congregation they take part in leading worship and singing, preaching, and home visitation.

Leadership of a youth retreat was a big challenge for Intagliatas. Tig provided the main input through Bible studies on the theme "Followers of Jesus." Karen was responsible for the arts and crafts, social activities, and the food. About 25 youth participated.

Santa Cruz, where Tig and Karen live, is a boom town. Bolivia is constantly faced with economic crises, coups, strikes, and shortages, so rural people move to the city in search of a better life. However, most are destined to live in barrios (neighborhoods) on the edge of the city where health services, education, and transportation are inadequate.

During 1984, Intagliatas are preparing to move into one of the marginal barrios. They are seeking to follow Jesus' incarnation of the gospel. They wish to share the "good news" in a holistic way, and be sensitive to the various needs of the people whether that be physical, emotional, or spiritual in nature.

*Bolivian youth at retreat listening to guest speaker from Argentina*

# BRAZIL: To Sing a Song

Six months ago Ellie Loewen indicated that the music songbook was still a long way from completion. Five hundred choruses had been submitted from Mennonite congregations throughout Brazil. Additional ones were still coming in. The intent was to include most songs being sung in Mennonite churches in Brazil so that it could be used for worship and praise.

The vision of how it would help and be a blessing to the churches is what kept Ellie, Marlene Daku, and others to the tasks of typing, sorting according to topics, indexing, and proofreading. Yet to be completed is the long list of music still to be written out; the choruses will be used earlier without music.

The book with 649 choruses finally went to the printers in December. One thousand copies will be printed and made available for purchase at less than $500 cruzeiros each (about 50¢ U.S.). This will be encouraging for the churches who had concerns about paying for the songbooks.

What excitement to see the songbook become a reality for the churches!

# Premier Issue

You continue to pray. You continue to give. What happens as a result of your praying and giving?

People are changed. Hope is offered. Relationships are established. Bridges are built. Misconceptions are corrected. Alternatives are made available.

The stories in *Comments* of changes in the lives of individuals and communities worldwide are just the tip of the iceberg. *Comments* will share from the lives of missionaries, the lives of those with whom they come into contact, and other topics relevant to the Commission on Overseas Mission and its ministries.

God, using servants from General Conference Mennonite churches, is working out his purpose in many places in today's world.

*Comments* will be released quarterly. It will be distributed as an insert in *The Mennonite* and through churches on a request basis.

MERIBETH SPRUNGER KRAYBILL, EDITOR

# JAPAN: Baptisms

The baptism of Mr. and Mrs. Hara was a highlight for the Beppu congregation. Their testimonies were very moving and brought tears to the eyes of many in the service that day. After the baptism, Mrs. Hagano got up to welcome them in behalf of the church. Tears streamed down her radiant face as she raised her hands heavenward and shouted, "Hallelujah!" It seemed as if a revival occurred. Their motto for 1984 is: Kazoku o Kirisuto e!" (the family for Christ).

Mrs. Egawa of the Hyuga congregation was baptized. During the fellowship meal that followed, five people indicated that they wanted to become baptized in 1984. In the same week, a high school student also indicated her interest in baptism if given parental permission.

Lily Derksen, 16, was baptized by her father, Peter, in the Beppu Mennonite Church in Japan.

*Lily Derksen with her parents, Peter and Mary, on day of her baptism*

# INDIA: Intercede for a Miracle

"1983 was a very difficult year for us, but through it all we learned in a new way the Lord's great promise for all of us—LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS! He revealed his presence in so many little ways to let us know that he is right here with us and that we are where he wants us to be at this time.

"We watched a splinter group, including friends whom we love and respect, break off from the Bharatiya General Conference Mennonite Church Conference. We spent hours and hours with both sides, seemingly to no avail. Reconciliation seems impossible at this time . . . but . . . we are praying for the impossible to take place.

"Won't you too intercede for a miracle? We know there is a whole network of support on tap in God's people—bearing up those who are trying to bring all unto him. We realize more than ever that the battle is the Lord's, not ours. Our part is obedience, regardless of cost."

EDWARD BURKHALTER

# Children versus Mission

When the Ferris family arrived in Tokyo, Carl Liechty reflected, "As I observed their children, many times my mind wandered back to the time we brought two little ones in response to our call to Kagoshima.

"Little did we know how greatly that choice would affect them! Through all the trials and tears of raising children in a foreign setting, there is the hope that someday they, too, will hear the call to go out as pilgrims and strangers, ignoring the powerful pull of culture and family, to become instruments of God's saving grace in places where little is known of the great God of the universe who acts in history to bring reconciliation and peace to us."

*Today 10 percent, or 16, of COM's missionary team are second-generation missionaries.*

# DEFINITION: North America Assignment (NAA)

Time spent by COM missionaries in North America for purposes of itineration, further theological or vocational training, and interaction with family. The length of NAA (six weeks to one year) varies depending on the length of the previous term (two to four years). NAA replaces the term *furlough* to reflect more accurately the nature of the time missionaries spend away from their overseas assignments.

# Urgent COM Personnel Needs:

—a **mechanic** to maintain a garage and transportation system in Zaire. The position requires thorough mechanical background in both gas and diesel; language study (French) provided. The term is three years.

—a **nurse** to serve at a maternity clinic in Mexico. Minimum requirement is for a Registered Nurse. Fluency in Spanish or German necessary. The term is two to three years.

**Mennonite Covenant Fellowship,** Clackamas, Ore., was chartered as a congregation on Jan., 22 in a special charter membership celebration service held at the Dudley Dow Community Center, where the congregation meets for worship. Don Yoder, secretary for church planting and evangelism for the General Conference's Commission on Home Ministries and Pacific District Conference, led the charter service. Thirteen people signed the charter membership role. Others participating in the service were Virgil Peters of the PDC home mission board and Elmer Friesen, PDC conference minister. Clackamas is in the Portland area.

*The congregation of Mennonite Community Fellowship at the charter membership service in Clackamas, Ore.*

**What's happening in Grenada?** A recent United Press International report from Grenada stated that "Governor General Sir Paul Scoon, who vowed to return 'true freedom' to Grenada, has banned public meetings, authorized arrests without warrants, and warned that he will censor the press."

# Youth education office schedules seven summer work camps

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The General Conference's youth education office will be offering seven work camps this summer for youth ages 15-18.

Work camp opportunities are as follows: Denver, June 16-July 13, working with disabled children at the Wheat Ridge training school; Portland, Ore., July 8-28, community outreach in the inner city; Southeastern Pennsylvania, July 18-Aug. 6, inner-city and camp work; Fort Wayne, Ind., July 14-22, assisting with inner-city Bible school; Akron, Pa., Aug. 6-17, pricing and packaging at SELFHELP; St. Catharines, Ont., July 1-15, working with senior citizens; Winnipeg, June 27-July 21, working with the camp program.

Work camps are established for several reasons: (1) to provide some service experience where youth could get a taste of volunteering time and energy, (2) to provide a way for young people to work at discipleship, (3) to provide youth with an intense living situation where elements of community are worked through together—the participants study the Bible, pray and share the joys and struggles of their experience—and (4) to allow youth to experience other lifestyles or life situations very different from their home life.

Approximately 4,000 young people have participated in these camps since 1946.

People interested in the work camps should contact Paula Diller Lehman, secretary for youth education, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

## Leading minister needed

Effective summer 1985 or negotiable

**First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg,** requires leading minister (Aeltester) fluent in English and German.

Please contact:
Vic Wieler, Chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.

## Associate minister needed

Effective Aug. 1, 1984—one-year appointment

**First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg,** requires associate minister fluent in English and German.

**Duties:** adult education, Sunday school (advisory capacity), preaching and worship, counseling and visitation, committee work

Please contact:
Vic Wieler, chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.

## Oratorio '84

The Mennonite Oratorio Choir
with members of the
Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra
present
Haydn's "The Creation"
(sung in German)

**Conductor:** William Baerg
**Soloists:** Geraldine Patterson - soprano
John Martens - tenor
Mark Watson - bass
**Date:** Sunday, April 1, 3 p.m.
**Place:** Centennial Concert Hall
**Tickets:** $6, $8, $10, $12
**Available at:** ATO, MBBC, CMBC
Covenant Bookstore
Fellowship Bookcentre
Hull Publishing Co.
**Sponsors:** Canadian Mennonite Bible College
George Wiebe, conductor
Mennonite Brethren Bible College
William Baerg, conductor


**1+1=4**

Mennonite Mutual Aid's Individual Retirement Annuity (IRA) and Annually Renewable Term (ART) life plan can help your financial equation add up the way it should. Here's how:

1 (IRA) + 1 (ART) = 4 benefits. ***Earning*** competitive rates on deposits. ***Saving*** for future needs. ***Assistance*** for your survivors at your death. ***Sharing*** with the church today.

For more information about the IRA/ART, call 800-348-7468; or (219)533-9511, collect within Indiana.

Mennonite Mutual Aid

**Five students** (right) at Union Biblical Seminary in India wrote a letter to the Commission on Overseas Mission expressing gratitude for scholarship funds. "We thank God that he has called us and is preparing us for his ministry at Union Biblical Seminary. We want to say a heartfelt thank you for your financial help and prayer support." Five or six UBS students annually have received scholarship funds from COM in the past several years.

**The Commission on Education** and the Mennonite Church's Board of Congregational Ministries is sponsoring a Mennonite World Conference tour for young adults. The 19-day tour will be hosted by Paula Diller Lehman, COE secretary for youth education, and Lavon Welty, MBCM associate secretary for congregational youth ministries. The tour costs $1,900 (U.S.) from New York and departs July 17 and returns Aug. 5. It will accommodate a maximum of 45 people. Anyone interested should write Paula Diller Lehman, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

# B.C. conference deals with constitution, ministry statement

Chilliwack, B.C.—"Let us be a binding and loosing community, seeking to learn the truth together. . . . Let us remember we serve a common Lord," chairman Peter Retzlaff admonished delegates to the annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia before closing the business sessions here Feb. 11.

Thus ended the 49th annual sessions of the provincial conference, this year held at the Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack Feb. 10-12 with the theme of "Binding and Loosing" taken from Matthew 18:18.

In a series of devotional Bible studies beginning Friday evening and continuing Saturday, Waldy Klassen of the Man to Man/Woman to Woman (M2/W2) program in Clearbrook, B.C., expounded on the theme. "The object of binding and loosing is to set people free from wrong habits, attitudes and action," he said, "and it must be done in the framework of love. Our ultimate authority is Christ."

Two issues that generated the most discussion were the proposed constitution for the conference and the statement on "Ordination, Licensing and Staff Appointments" proposed by the committee on the ministry.

In introducing the former, the constitution committee reminded delegates of the importance of adherence to and agreement with the conference constitution. Presenter Walter Paetkau referred to the weekend's theme in saying that participation in the conference "binds the congregation to the conference" and added, "It can be restrictive and annoying, or very freeing."

No action was taken on the constitution at these sessions; representatives were instructed to take the constitutional proposals home to their respective congregations for careful study. Comments are to be submitted by May 31 of this year so the committee can draft another proposal by September 1984.

The committee on the ministry had prepared guidelines for uniformity in ordination and licensing of ministers "for its own participation in the vital task of appointing and ordaining leadership to the individual congregations of our conference." The proposals included guidelines to facilitate the selection and agreement process when ministerial candidates apply for positions with B.C. conference churches. The suggested procedure includes requiring the candidate to complete a doctrinal questionnaire, and dialogue with the provincial committee on the ministry.

The assembled delegates passed the proposal to present the questionnaire and document to individual congregations in the coming year and to bring it back to the 1985 sessions for decision.

Other executive committee recommendations passed included a motion to have the program committee recognize next year's 50th anniversary of the B.C. conference by planning a special program and celebrations to be a part of the 1985 annual sessions and a motion to have the conference body approve the commissioning, writing and publishing of a 50-year story of the conference. Originally it had been hoped to have the history booklet finished in time for the 1985 sessions but it was agreed that proper completion of this project would likely take longer.

Topics of other executive committee recommendations included increased subsidy for Columbia Bible Institute in Clearbrook for the coming year due to budgetary shortfalls at CBI this past year, incorporation of undesignated estate funds into the budget at 20 percent per year, and the hiring of a part-time bookkeeper in the B.C. conference offices. All were passed.

The missions/service committee recommendation to extend the service of Jake Giesbrecht's working with Indo-Canadian people of B.C. was approved, and the ongoing task of that committee to develop conference/congregational partnerships in multicultural ministries was recognized.

A 1984 operating budget for the conference at $519,160 was also approved.

Of special interest to friends of the late D. P. Neufeld was the announcement by Mennonite Foundation of an endowment fund for practical theology in his name at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. The purpose of the endowment fund will be to expand the program of leadership for pastoral training at the school. Neufeld, longtime MCC Canada and Canadian and B.C. conference leader and pastor, died in 1982.

It was also recognized that ministering to university students should be a priority for the conference. An ad hoc committee will take one year to investigate how best to foster and nurture relations with post-high school students and report back to the conference in 1985.

Columbia Bible Institute, though responsible to the CBI Society and not the B.C. Conference directly, also gave a brief report. *Amy Rinner Dueckman*

## Mechanic needed

**The Mennonite Church of Zaire** is requesting a mechanic experienced in gas and diesel engines. Some administrative ability is also desirable. The term of service is three years, including French language study.

For more information or to apply, contact:
John Sommer
Commission on Overseas Mission
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-5100.

**A unique educational tool** is in the making and will be available for use in congregations by September. *Discover* is a Bible survey course which proposes to help lay people get an overview of the entire Bible. The idea was born at the think tank on adult education held at Estes Park, Colo, just before the 1980 General Conference. It was pointed out that many adults lack the historical and literary framework necessary to do adequate Bible study. The course, written by Maynard Shelly, consists of 34 sessions, which have been divided into four parts so that people can study the material in four periods of time.

**The economic shock waves** from the forced abandonment of three nuclear power plants may have belatedly done what thousands of anti-nuclear protesters could never quite accomplish: scare the utilities away from atomic power. Companies had to give up on the plants, including one that was 97 percent completed, because of escalating and unexpectedly high operating costs. "Unfortunately, this happened about $50 billion later than it could have," energy consultant Charles Komanoff told the *National Catholic Reporter*. He has been arguing for nearly a decade that nuclear power is too costly to survive in the marketplace.

**Several survivors** of the first atomic blast at Hiroshima were recently invited to preview the ABC made-for-television film "The Day After," then asked about their impressions. According to Ruby Thiessen, missionary in Kobe, Japan, with the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission, "they were unanimous in their evaluation that the film does not portray even closely the horror of the actual experience."

# RECORd

## WORKERS

*Rodney Litwiller*, Dewey (Ill.) Church, began a one-year MVS term Sept. 10, 1983, working in home repair in Wichita, Kan. His parents are Kenneth and Mary Litwiller of Foosland, Ill.

*Rebecca Martin*, Shore Church, Shipshewana, Ind., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 6, 1983, as minister of Poor Peoples Action Coalition, North of Howard, Chicago. She has a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College. Her parents are Allen and Ruth Martin of Shipshewana.

*Susan Mecartney*, Redford United Methodist Church, Detroit, began a one-year MVS term Sept. 5, 1983, as a child-care worker at Community Mennonite Day Care in Markham, Ill. She has a bachelor's degree from Mercy College in Detroit. Her parents are John and Nancy Mecartney of Detroit.

*Joel Miller*, United Methodist Church, Macedonia, Ohio, began a one-year MVS term Sept. 9, 1983, working at Consolidated Neighborhood Services Clinic in St. Louis. He has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton (Ohio) College. His parents are Gerald and Lila Miller of Northfield, Ohio.

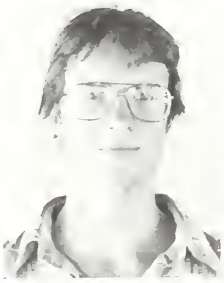
*Cindy Neufeld*, Bethel Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., began a one-year MVS term Sept. 6, 1983, working with Oklahoma Municipal Hospital Volunteer Services in Oklahoma City. Her parents are Peter and Onalee Neufeld of Mountain Lake.

*Yvonne Stoesz*, Bergthaler Church, Altona, Man., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 1, 1983, at SLARC Community Center in St. Louis. She has a bachelor's degree from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. Her parents are Erdmann and Sara Stoesz of Altona.

*Litwiller*

*Martin*

*Stroad*


*Voth*

*Mecartney*

*Miller*

*Weaver*

*Wieler*

*Neufeld*

*Stoesz*

*Kenneth Stroad*, Peninsula Lutheran Church, Gig Harbor, Wash., began a two-year MVS term Oct. 17, 1983, as program assistant for Jeffco Daybreak in Arvada, Colo. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. His parents are Kenneth and Harriet Stroad of Gig Harbor.

*Laverne Voth*, Grace Hill Church, Whitewater, Kan., began a nine-month MVS term Aug. 22, 1983, as a home repair worker in Wichita, Kan. Her parents are Arlo and Ann Voth of Whitewater.

*Paul Weaver*, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, began a one-year MVS term Sept. 1, 1983, as a refugee worker in Markham, Ill. He has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton College. His parents are J. Richard and Margaret Weaver of Bluffton.

*Verna Wieler*, Reinland Evangelical Mennonite Mission Church, Winkler, Man., began a one-year MVS term Sept. 7, 1983, as a child-care worker in Liberal, Kan. Her parents are Jacob and Margaret Wieler of Winkler.

# ...and When They Shall Ask

*A dramatic 90-minute documentary film on the history of the Russian Mennonites*

U.S. PREMIERE SHOWINGS (Dave Dueck, producer, will be in attendance)

| | |
|---|---|
| San Jose, Calif. | **Linden Glen Church**<br>Friday, March 23<br>7:30 p.m. |
| Shafter, Calif. | **Mennonite Brethren Church**<br>Saturday, March 24<br>7:00 p.m. |
| Fresno, Calif. | **Fresno Convention Center**<br>Sunday, March 25<br>2:30 p.m. |
| Reedley, Calif. | **Reedley High School**<br>Tuesday, March 27<br>7:30 p.m. |
| Mountain Lake, Minn. | **Mountain Lake High School**<br>Tuesday, April 10<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Henderson, Neb. | **Henderson Community School Gym**<br>Thursday, April 12<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Wichita, Kan. | **Century II Auditorium**<br>Friday, April 13<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Hillsboro, Kan. | **Tabor College**<br>Sunday and Monday, April 15 and 16<br>8:00 p.m. each evening |
| North Newton, Kan. | **Bethel College**<br>Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, April 17, 18 and 19<br>8:00 p.m. each evening |
| Phoenix, Ariz. | **Civic Plaza, Yuma Room**<br>Saturday, March 31, 8 p.m. |
| Tulsa, Okla. | **City of Faith Auditorium**<br>Wednesday, April 4, 8 p.m. |

**Other showings to be announced.**

## Ticket Information

*Check local announcements for the ticket outlets in your community, or contact:*

Mennonite Media Society
202-1695 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB R2G 1P1
Phone: (204) 661-2483

Tickets: $8.00
Student, $4.00
Record album or tape available at the showings

SOUVENIR RECORD ALBUM: Recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra
Irmgard Baerg, *pianist* Boris Brott, *conductor* Victor Davies, *composer*

# Perspective '84: a personal voyage

*Heidi Regier Kreider*

*"Ah tol' Jesus it would be alright if he changed mah name;*
*Jesus tol' me ah would have to live humble if he changed mah name.*
*Jesus tol' me that the world would be 'gainst me if he changed mah name.*
*Ah tol' Jesus it would be alright if he changed mah name."*
(Traditional, from *Songs of Zion*)

*Reg Snyder, Paul Weaver and Bev Sawatzky share personal reflections with Ron Kraybill.*

These lines, sung during our first session at Perspective '84, impressed me as one illustration of the theme of the conference, "Building a New Creation: Partners in Hope."

They speak of hope, of the kind of obedience to which we were called by speakers and which we celebrated together in worship, dance and song. And beneath this variety of activities there flowed that undercurrent of dialogue and processing of ideas that so wonderfully gives a conference momentum.

I was encouraged by the openness to God among participants, the desire to have God shape and use us as individuals and as a body. We learned again that God's continuing work of creation depends on our "response-ability" to God's grace. God actually entrusts us with the vision of shalom.

With this acceptance of responsibility, however, comes the process of discerning and searching out how we might best work at this. Speaker Virginia Mollenkott especially challenged us to reevaluate our attitudes and actions toward brothers and sisters unlike ourselves. We need to consciously change our "us-versus-them" thought patterns that judge those of different economic status, color, sexual orientation, cultural background, sex or physical ability. As long as we allow injustice against any of these, how can we expect our lives to be instruments of evangelism?

Some participants at Perspective '84 felt that the presence and gifts of non-ethnic Mennonites and even non-Mennonites need to be incorporated even more into our conference and churches. We still rely too much on the "Mennonite Game" and traditional assumptions about ethnic Mennonite background.

Again we were pushed to take seriously the brokenness and gross distortion of the world that is against us. We acknowledged that we truly are the church together "in a dangerous place." Yet our leaders urged us to judge reality by new standards and to evaluate the status quo in the light of God's redemptive justice. It is our responsibility to look for ways by which our lives can reflect the kind of social and economic order guided by this justice. We can then celebrate hope because we are already part of God's future creation.

These affirmations do not, of course, erase the concerns, questions and reactions that arise when young adults meet together to tackle some hard problems. For instance, I deeply appreciated Perry Yoder's biblical scholarship and interpretation, but some wondered how best to study the Bible from a position of less theological education. Certainly, though, I was prompted to engage more seriously in this study and in reading, prayer and contemplation.

Many participants felt joyously liberated by Mollenkott's affirmation that our spirituality is entwined with our sexuality and that both are graciously accepted by God. Others felt uncertain about how to understand the implications of this: What does it mean to accept Mollenkott's assertion that relationships (social and sexual) should be evaluated by their quality of love and ability to draw God's grace into society, rather than by legal and institutional standards so dominated by patriarchy and heterosexualism?

Most of us were simultaneously shocked, gratified, angered or delighted by the use of inclusive "God language" in worship and speeches. I enjoyed tasting the newness of praying to God as Mother and hearing "sister" and "she" used as often as "brother" and "him" in song lyrics.

We were encouraged to accept our local congregations and support groups as bodies which model the new creation of Christ. We struggled with the meaning of intimacy and self-acceptance, of accountability and confession.

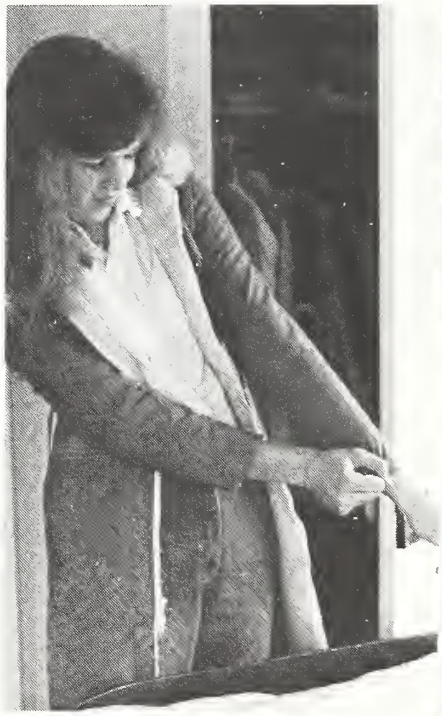
An important concern which was raised dealt with how we can best share what we have experienced upon returning home. We value the traditions which have helped bring us to where we are, but we must urge our congregations to take risks of concrete change. As one person told me, it is exciting to participate in a conference that actually *expects* change to occur. We pray that our local congregations and fellowships can dialogue with and support us in this.

I am grateful to the General Conference for taking the risk to sponsor Perspective '84 and would hope that we can live out the challenge and responsibility which we have received through it. Given the multicolored tapestry of experiences and backgrounds, joys, hurts and gifts, we can still affirm together that we want to be partners with God.

Yes, Lord, it's alright if you change my name.

*Heidi Regier Kreider is a 1983 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., where she majored in Bible and religion. She is currently employed in the registrar's office at Bethel.*

# The million dollar coat



Your warm coat
outgrown here

can be sold at
an MCC thrift shop
to give warmth to
another North American

and to support
MCC work overseas.
This employment creation
project in Bangladesh
allows Shefali to work
in her own cool sari
to help support
her family.

Last year MCC shipped 60 tons of clothing overseas, much of it for refugees. Some Western-style clothing is not suitable for tropical climates and cultures. Dollars generated by selling this clothing are used to support overseas programs. MCC's 84 thrift shops raised $1.5 million in 1983.

*Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501*
*MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8*

## Responses to "Questions"

"Questions . . ." (Jan. 31 issue) is a good editorial. Often posing questions and answering with additional questions points the way to understanding a situation, even though the first or intermediate questions are never specifically answered. The questions together constitute a very forceful statement. I would encourage more writing in this manner. We need *honest, direct questions* to think productively.

Your editorial ends with 1 Peter 3:15—very good. One of my favorite admonitions from the New Testament is Colossians 4:5, 6, which Goodspeed renders, "Use wisdom in dealing with outsiders, making the most of your opportunities. Always put your message attractively and yet pointedly, and be prepared to give every inquirer a fitting answer." *Willard E. Kaufman, 615 S. Christian Ave., Moundridge, KS 67107*

Feb. 7

I found the Jan. 31 editorial courageous and honest, pointing to needs regardless of persuasion.

I was particularly struck with the question raised toward people who lead others and congregations out of the General Conference. That problem is complex; nevertheless your observation struck me as essential and it encourages me to be positive in my effort to speak out within the GC. *Ted VanderEnde, St. John Mennonite Church, Pandora, OH 45877*

Feb. 7

## We voted against withdrawal

Warren Wiersbe, in "Tuning the Tension" (*Good News Broadcaster*, 1983) writes: ". . . tension is a sign of health, and it can be used by the Spirit to strengthen the church and help each of us grow . . . it is not the tensions that cause trouble; it is the inept way people deal with these tensions."

The tension stirred up by voices advocating a removal of homosexuality and abortion-on-demand from the list of clear biblical prohibitions, needs consideration.

1. Though these voices may be a reaction to the refusal of many to show caring concern as followers of "the friend of publicans and sinners," we must also note that he lovingly told them to "go and *sin* no more." (2) We must resist attacking persons. (3) We need to pray much for those with whom we disagree and approach them as Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-17. I confess that I have neither prayed for nor personally written the ones whose names have been publicized as spokespersons for the above-mentioned causes.

I took part in a congregational business meeting in which the main item of business was to vote for or against withdrawing from the General Conference and the district conference. My wife and I voted against withdrawing.

The immediate reason for proposed withdrawal was the desire not to be identified as part of a denomination that has refused to recognize the authority of Scripture in stating that the practice of homosexuality and abortion-on-demand, unrepented of, make one unfit to enter the kingdom of God.

We voted against withdrawing because our church polity does not make us support those programs of the denomination in which this is tolerated, and because we believe that the historic GC stand for biblical morality will yet prevail, by God's grace, through the prayers and actions of those of us who hold that stand. Only as long as we're *in* the family can we reach out caringly to family members we believe are wrong. *Name withheld by request*

Feb. 7

*Editor's note: I believe you make a significant point. Most of the time when we speak of "withdrawal," we do it before we follow the biblical teaching, e.g. Matthew 18:15-17. How highly is Scripture then regarded? Only when convenient for us?*

## Confirms worst suspicions

My worst suspicions concerning anti-urban bias were confirmed by S. Roy Kaufman's "Urban Ministry Yes, Urban Future No" (Jan. 17 issue).

Kaufman passes harsh judgment upon the city from outside of the city, a colonial endeavor at best. He speaks out of but not beyond his own rural experience.

Kaufman cites the rural setting of the gospel narratives and the Babylon image in Revelation. Omitted is mention of the urban focus of the early Pauline mission (see Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*). "The mission of the Pauline circle was conceived from start to finish as an urban movement" (p. 10), and "the Greco-Roman city became the dominant environment of the Christian movement" (p. 11).

Kaufman's suggestions that "small, diversified, self-sufficient human communities . . . may exist within the city" and that the city is an "escape from community" are unfair, misrepresentative and offensive characterizations. People are human and caring in the city, and there are communities of meaning and belonging. The city is not "about" alienation and rebellion.

There seems to be some theological confusion on Kaufman's part concerning the origins of human rebelliousness against God and God's intended order. Sin as the root of personal and corporate evil is omitted from Kaufman's equation, i.e. the city is equated with sin. The city is not the only place of human rebellion against God. Some rural structures and relationships are as pernicious as their urban counterparts. The city and its structures are not the "focus of evil in the modern world"; the human propensity to sin is.

Kaufman is mistaken in his assertion that the rural-urban symbiosis is one-sided, i.e. exploitative of the country. The rural population is extremely dependent upon the "consumer goods" and "industrial output," as well as the transportation networks that issue from the city.

My question to Kaufman is: "Just what is the 'fate of urban life?' " John 3:16 does not begin, "For God so loved the country. . . ." It is at this point that the New Jerusalem image (in Revelation 21:2) speaks most powerfully to us. To love city people, as Kaufman claims to, is not the misguided attempt to save city people from the city; instead, it is a caring about the peace and welfare of the city that is creative in compassion, conciliation, administration and evangelization (see Benjamin Tonna, *Gospel for the Cities*).

Inasmuch as the church is at home in any context (in the "world"), the urban church is entitled, indeed obligated, to feel as at home in its ambient as the rural or suburban church feels in its. The church belongs in the urban context to the same degree it belongs in rural and suburban contexts. Tensions are inevitable, particularly within the Mennonite framework. However, we in the church should seek a rural-urban dialogue and relationship that is characterized by fairness, openness and a mutual acknowledgment of the validity of life ministry in differing yet redeemable contexts. *Richard D. Buterbaugh, Maryse Nazon, 1515 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, IL 60607*

Feb. 10

# The Foundation Series for Children revised

*Edna Dyck*

The revised Foundation Series for Children (from preschool through grades 7 and 8) is rolling off the presses in Newton, Kan., Scottdale, Pa., and Nappanee, Ind. It is jointly published by the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church and Brethren in Christ Church. Year 2, Quarter 1, will be available shortly for evaluation—scheduled to be used in the congregation in September.

The purpose of the revision, as officially stated, is as follows: "We affirm the basic value of the Foundation Series for Children and see the revision as an attempt to fulfill more completely the original vision of the editors and writers—as it relates to content, methods and outcomes expressed in the original overall objective." Through evaluations from teachers and Christian educators, the editors and publishers became aware of areas where the material could be improved and made more usable.

Some parts of the curriculum have not been changed. The basic themes and the chronological treatment of the Bible story are the same. Jesus is still central and the curriculum is story-oriented. The five basic components of each session remain as before: Prepare for the Session, Study the Bible, Set a Direction, Guide the Learning, and Reflect and Look Ahead. A sixth component, Alternate Suggestions, has been added. It is to help teachers choose their activities if they have small classes, shorter class time or less space than average.

Features to help the inexperienced teacher have been added to the new curriculum. Inside the front cover of each teacher's guide is a summary of the entire quarter, including teaching objectives and long-range preparations that are required for some of the sessions. Each session now includes the story focus and a faith-meaning statement. The story focus summarizes the content of the lesson, and the faith-meaning statement identifies the goal of the lesson.

Another addition is the Materials Needed and Advance Preparation sections in each session. Busy teachers will appreciate seeing at a glance what materials are needed for teaching and the preparations they must make before class time. The numbered step-by-step progression through the lesson will similarly be helpful for teachers who have a minimum of preparation time.

Additional help will also be given the lay teacher in special end-of-the-session teaching tips, where methods like role playing, finger painting and storytelling will be described.

Teachers have asked that there be more consistency in size and shape of the student materials from quarter to quarter. They have also asked for more fun-type exercises in some of the quarters. Writers and editors have tried to comply with these requests. The most dramatic change in student material is possibly in the Kindergarten curriculum. The old student leaflet *In and Out* has become a new colorfully illustrated *Rainbow*. Children will be delighted with the beautiful portrayals of the familiar Bible stories by Harriet Miller.

"To provide congregations with education materials that will assist adults to share with children in the midst of the congregation the heritage of the people of God so that the children individually and corporately will freely respond, to the full extent of their ability, to Jesus Christ," is the overall objective of the Foundation Series. This objective has not changed in the revision. The writers, editors and publishers sincerely desire that the revised curriculum will be a better tool so that adults will more easily be able to share and children will more freely respond.

*Edna Dyck, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, serves as revision editor of the Foundation Series, proofreader and as the Commission on Education secretary for children's education (part time).*

# We listened to Nicaraguans

*Robert Kreider*

". . . praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

In the media, U.S. officials repeatedly tell us that the Sandinista government of Nicaragua is an evil force which threatens the life and security of freedom-loving countries throughout the Americas. Our visit to Nicaragua was too brief to assess efforts to topple the Sandinista government and restore the power of the Somoza regime (contra rebels). But we did talk with Mennonite and evangelical leaders.

The Moravians were among the first evangelical missionaries to the New World. John Wesley came to Georgia in the 1730s with the Moravians. The largest evangelical group on the east coast of Nicaragua are Moravians who find their base among the Miskito people. Relations between the Miskitos and the Sandinista government have been shaky at best. We met with a Moravian pastor who is intent on rebuilding the broken relations with the new socialist government. His meeting house is a place of worship, a hostel, clinic, legal service center and school for refugee people seeking help in the city of Managua. He acknowledged that the position of the Moravian Church is still fragile but he has much hope: "We believe we have to work with the revolution and some day we will come through."

He said Sandinista attitudes to the church have changed. "Evangelicals are no longer regarded as a threat to the government.

"Our task," he said, "is to help our people understand the revolutionary process and to understand the ways of reconciliation." The Moravian Church adopted a statement in February 1983 calling for peace and reconciliation. The violence and injustice which presses in upon the people leads them to rely solely on the biblical bedrock of the gospel.

We also met a Nicaraguan Baptist who is exuberantly in love with the church, his welfare work, the Mennonites, his family and his neighborhood Bible study group. He told of having a conversion experience in the last 10 years. "The Lord gave me opportunity to go to the university. The words of Jesus broke through to me, 'As my father sent me, so send I you.' " He told of how the

*The upset of the earthquake in the early '70s continues today in a different form. But the waiting for new opportunities is still there.*

educated people fled the country with the fall of Somoza. "Evangelicals were of the poor and did not leave. Less than 1 percent of the evangelical pastors left."

He commented that the Sandinista government is "providing a broad space for church development." Three influences present in his country are (1) Sandinista nationalism—that is, old-fashioned Nicaraguan nationalism, (2) Marxist-Leninism, (3) Christian thought and life.

He said, "The national directory of the Sandinista Party has stated that Christianity is not necessarily an opiate of the people, as Marxists would say, but is a resource to the nation." In different ways he lamented that Nicaragua is suffering from aggression by the United States. He affirmed his belief in Nicaraguan socialism and in the need for Christians to search the Scriptures to find "the way of the Lord in this setting."

He spoke appreciatively of MCC. "You may be small but you are widely recognized for your peacemaking, nonviolence and your services. It is more than praying. It is acting."

He told of his 16-year-old son who had come to him that week and said, "Daddy, I am going to ask to be baptized. I want to be with my people. I feel I have to obey the Lord. I understand better my task in the world." The father added, "I think your people helped our son."

Another evening we met three Mennonite church leaders, each from a different conference. One told how in the past 13 years his conference had established 45 congregations and 35 preaching stations. In 1983, 18 church buildings were constructed, some with assistance from the Sandinista government. He said rapid growth brings its problems, such as the need for pastoral education. A second leader shared how they take advantage of every opportunity to share their convictions on peace and non-violence. He observed that aggression from the outside creates "an issue of conscience for our young men."

We asked what gives uniqueness to their particular evangelical churches. The responses were varied: "Our peace position. . . . Our love for others, showing our concern not only for people's spiritual needs but also their physical needs. . . . Our churches are known for having a lot of love for others and for visitors. . . . We are characterized as conservative—a strong emphasis on discipline in family life. For us it is important to project Christian life into the community work and concerns. . . . Sound doctrine. . . . We believe and preach the salvation of the whole man. . . . Our peace position is Anabaptist. We believe in the whole Bible." They were pleased to discuss service and development programs of the church.

One spoke of the need to tailor their counseling to the problems of each. "I try to speak from the Bible," he said. "When a person has a need, one doesn't give him the answers, but one leads him to find the answers in Scripture."

One young deacon from a rapidly growing Mennonite congregation rode with us on the way to his home. He asked about American Mennonite attitudes toward U.S. efforts to overthrow the Nicaraguan government. He was pleased to know that some Mennonites write letters to Washington officials. He turned to us directly and asked, "Would you tell your people we want peace? We don't want to be pushed to war. Although our church has some problems, we can work through them with our government."

We dropped him off at his house on a crowded, dimly lit street. My thoughts were sad thoughts. *A Meetinghouse article.*

*Robert Kreider, Box 365, North Newton, KS 67117, is a member of the Mennonite World Conference executive. He visited several Central American countries last summer in connection with the MWC executive meeting in Honduras.*

# We are people of a third way

*Stan Freyenberger*

In the Sept. 27, 1983, issue of the *Gospel Herald*, Myron Augsburger wrote about "A Renewed Church." It was the first time I noticed a church paper article about a third way that was not on the continuum between liberal left and fundamentalist right.

"Our prophetic role in society is that we are followers of a third way, his way, and we are neither rightist conservatives nor leftist humanists. But the third way will have lost its power if it is seen only as a middle-of-the-road philosophical or political stance rather than as an identification with Jesus," Augsburger wrote.

Within the Mennonite community, individuals and congregations are identified as conservative, liberal or something in between, depending on how evangelical or social justice oriented we are. This used to disturb me. I did not want to be only on the liberal, social justice end of the continuum because of my service activities in missions. I had also many conservative, fundamentalist beliefs about the need for salvation and all that goes with that. So what am I? Something in between, diluting the best of both? No.

What a refreshing feeling to know that you and I do not need to get into the power struggles of defending a position on that line. Anabaptist theology offers us a third way, that of being directed by the centrality of Christ.

When Christ is central to our beliefs, we need one objective—to become more like him. This is done by following the example of his life and teaching. We put ourselves in a position of submission, of servanthood, of service, of weakness, of vulnerability. We are liberated from the power struggles of the old way.

That sounds heavy and depressing. How can I do any or all of that? As an individual it would be hard or nearly impossible. If we look back to our central focus, Christ, and how he lived, we see an active community of believers. The disciples confessed Christ as Lord and turned from the old. They didn't just turn and stop, they came into the community of believers where nurture and growth follow. Community is an absolute necessity to live Christ daily.

Paul M. Lederach's *A Third Way* was written with the intent of setting forth key affirmations of Mennonite faith and to compare and contrast the Anabaptist/Mennonite view with other theological streams.

*When Christ is central to our beliefs, we need one objective—to become more like him.*

1. In viewing the centrality of Christ, we have to see the whole Christ event. Imagine a standing drum or cylinder with the front side visible. By faith we know the back side is also there. So it is with Christ. On the front is the public, visible Jesus of Nazareth; this includes his baptism, ministry, works and death on the cross. Believers and non-believers saw this. The back side takes faith to see or believe; this is the Lord/Christ side which includes his conception, his resurrection, the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' Second Coming and his reign until. . . .

Too often we take only one side of Christ and then, working from a power postion, say we should all be involved in social justice *or* saving the soul. There are two sides to the Christ event and both parts are essential to the whole.

2. Within the fellowship of believers we are living the kingdom life today. When Jesus began to preach, he said, "Repent, the kingdom of God is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). We see that repentance is a part of it because we have to turn away from the old. And in turning, we go into kingdom living. Here and now is the beginning of eternity. The cross does not save you from some future day; it puts you into fellowship with the community of believers and the kingdom life today. One day we will see his kingdom in the perfection of heaven, but it is also already here.

3. To look at salvation we have to go back to Christ and his church because it is the church that offers salvation. Where faith is reduced to a list of beliefs, we feed the notion of an invisible church. Salvation involves the whole person, spiritual and physical, and you are part of the visible church through all words and deeds that are not of this earthly kingdom. Perhaps rather than the question "Are you saved?" we should say, "Do you know Jesus and are you following him as a part of his church?"

I have only touched the tip of the iceberg. If we keep Christ's teaching and example central or the starting point in looking at issues in the church, we'll often see things from the third way perspective. The Mennonite church, with all its problems, is very dear to me. I pray that through this sharing there can be a wider awareness of our potential witness to the wider church and our lost neighbors.

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# MEDITATION

## Mission and education go together

*". . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. . ." (Matthew 28:20a).*

Learning is living. Growing in understanding is learning.

Is it possible to live and not to learn? Living does not guarantee learning. The expression "learning is living" is the essence of the fullness of life. God revealed this abundance through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. With a missionary spirit, teaching communicates the enthusiasm of abundant life.

Christ taught through interaction. The nurturing process of loving little ones to Jesus is the only model Jesus taught us about children. When churches are tempted to embrace methods of competition borrowed from the secular world and give rewards of food, privilege and pleasure, one wishes instead for the teachings of Christ to come alive.

Teacher-training classes and workshops like Project: Teach help us evaluate such areas as the motivation to learn. Christ's virtues of warmth, confrontation and genuine caring continue to teach us.

Values for life are also important. How does a congregation teach what is essential for growth, and thus for learning? To emphasize numbers, dollars and involvement may obscure quality living. Doing what is right for the wrong reasons is not helpful when learning to live the abundant life. Instead, we are invited to be filled with Christ's spirit. This is the art of being.

Are our congregation's values rooted in Christ's teachings? Who will teach? Who will provide a forum for learning through self-discovery? Many people in our congregations know about Christ. I hope there are as many who know about living in the abundance of Christ's spirit. Have we tasted? Is it difficult to chew the food and swallow what it means to be involved in establishing peace and justice in the world for our global family? Who will prompt us to think about the responsibilities of being a citizen of God's kingdom?

The early church relied heavily on the use of debate and discussion when thinking through what it means to be faithful to Jesus Christ. The discussions were often continued by taking the concerns to more mature congregations for help to discern what is of God and what is of humankind. Praise God for congregations who seek growth through study and debate.

Part of the mission of the church is to educate. Learning happens through sharing how God is active in our lives. Learning happens through observing someone being an imitation of Christ. Learning happens through doing.

To participate in this abundant life is Christ's desire for all. When an understanding of the goals and of the participants accompanies learning, the divine perspective filters through our human intentions.

Let us cultivate an awareness of the interrelatedness of life and peoplehood. Who in your congregation is equipped or is being equipped to lead in the process of discernment by the congregation? We need to discern the gifts of teachers for the church. Ignoring differences in a congregation is denying an opportunity for study, growth, understanding and support in the community of faith. The early church sent forth its best in starting and nurturing new congregations. Let us continue to be informed about needs, encourage training and excellence, and equip the saints to reach out. The support of missions includes education. Education is part of the church's mission.

*Lois Tieszen Preheim*

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This issue focuses on some of the Commission on Education ministries in the General Conference. Some articles are written by COE staff and some by elected commission members. Lois Barrett, former associate editor of *The Mennonite*, assisted COE in requesting and editing articles.

In addition to the COE focus, we share several articles that try to expand our spiritual awareness. Our prayer is that the whole issue may encourage Christian education in all its phases.


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# editorial

## What is the gospel according to you?

*J. W. Sprunger*

*You are writing a gospel a chapter a day, by the deeds that you do, by the words that you say. People read what you write whether faithful or true. Say, what is the gospel according to you?*

That typewritten note attached to the center of an empty bulletin board in a bare college room greeted me my first day on campus. Its message has caused me to reflect time and time again, wondering if individual Christians have had a greater educational impact on the church than the traditional Sunday school classes, clubs, Christian Endeavor and youth programs. Where was it that I learned of following Jesus in everyday life? If the Sunday school curriculum gave me the word, where did I see the word translated into deed?

I remember a small Sunday school class taught underneath the stairway. I remember it not so much for the lesson content but because of the teacher. I remember how we talked as a class when we had seen him smoking a cigarette during the week. We had not known he had a smoking habit, and now our image of him had changed. When he spoke of keeping our bodies clean, for they are the temple of the Holy Spirit, we knew that he did not practice what he taught, so why should we?

I have thought of Jesus and how he ministered. He lived what he taught. His disciples saw him daily, working, resting and studying. And he modeled a new way.

A professor once asked me, "Who are your disciples?" Paul had his Silas and Barnabas had Timothy. Peter had his Mark. John the Baptist had his disciples. What person was I working with on an individual basis so we could grow together in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? I was hard pressed to give an answer.

But then I began to rationalize, "To whom is Jesus speaking his mandate in Matthew 28:19-20, 'As you go into the world, baptize and make disciples of all nations'? Perhaps that was not for everyone. Maybe it was for his apostles or for General Conference Mennonite pastors or possibly the deacons, but not for me." And yet as I studied the biblical text and our Anabaptist history, I realized that in our tradition we have interpreted that passage as being for all. So the question still remains: Who is my disciple? And who is your disciple? Who are we nurturing in the faith?

The role of the individual in Christian education is important. But equally important is the corporate body. Leland Harder in his article "Population Changes in the Sunday School" (pp. 122-125) suggests that church members who are college graduates (23.3 percent) "will be demanding a Sunday school curriculum that has greater educational integrity and gives them more options for enrolling in alternative adult courses related to more comprehensive and balanced study of the Bible in relationship to what it means to follow Christ in a thermonuclear age." We too have to be sensitive to the 31.6 percent of our constituency who have less than a grade 12 education. Those people are often afraid to speak because they are threatened by those who have been to college and can speak well. They need resources that affirm them.

We also need to be sensitive to those who are joining our church from non-church backgrounds, who are not familiar with the biblical stories of faith. We need to provide resources for settings where people from different ethnic, theological, social, academic and economic backgrounds can grow together in faith.

As we communicate with each other, we need to follow the principles outlined by the Krehbiels in their article, "Talking and Listening with Love" (pp. 128-129). But let us not be idealistic in thinking our problem will be solved if we can only find the right words. With the Krehbiels, I recognize our style of talking needs to be flexible. It needs to set the stage for understanding, conflict resolution and more accurate communication.

When I think of both the individual and the corporate aspects of Christian education, I realize that both are important. I need a close nurturing relationship with someone, not only being a disciple, but also discipling another. I also need the support and guidance of a large Christian community in working out this discipleship.

You see, we are writing a chapter today, you and I and the church. By the deeds that we do and by the words that we say. We are being read by our children, our colleagues, our family, our friends and enemies too. Did we reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ? Say, what is the gospel according to us?

MAR 27 '84

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:07 MARCH 27, 1984

## Inside this special media issue

The media revolution can serve the church

Churches in the information age

It could be the Electronic Renaissance

From buffalo chip to microchip

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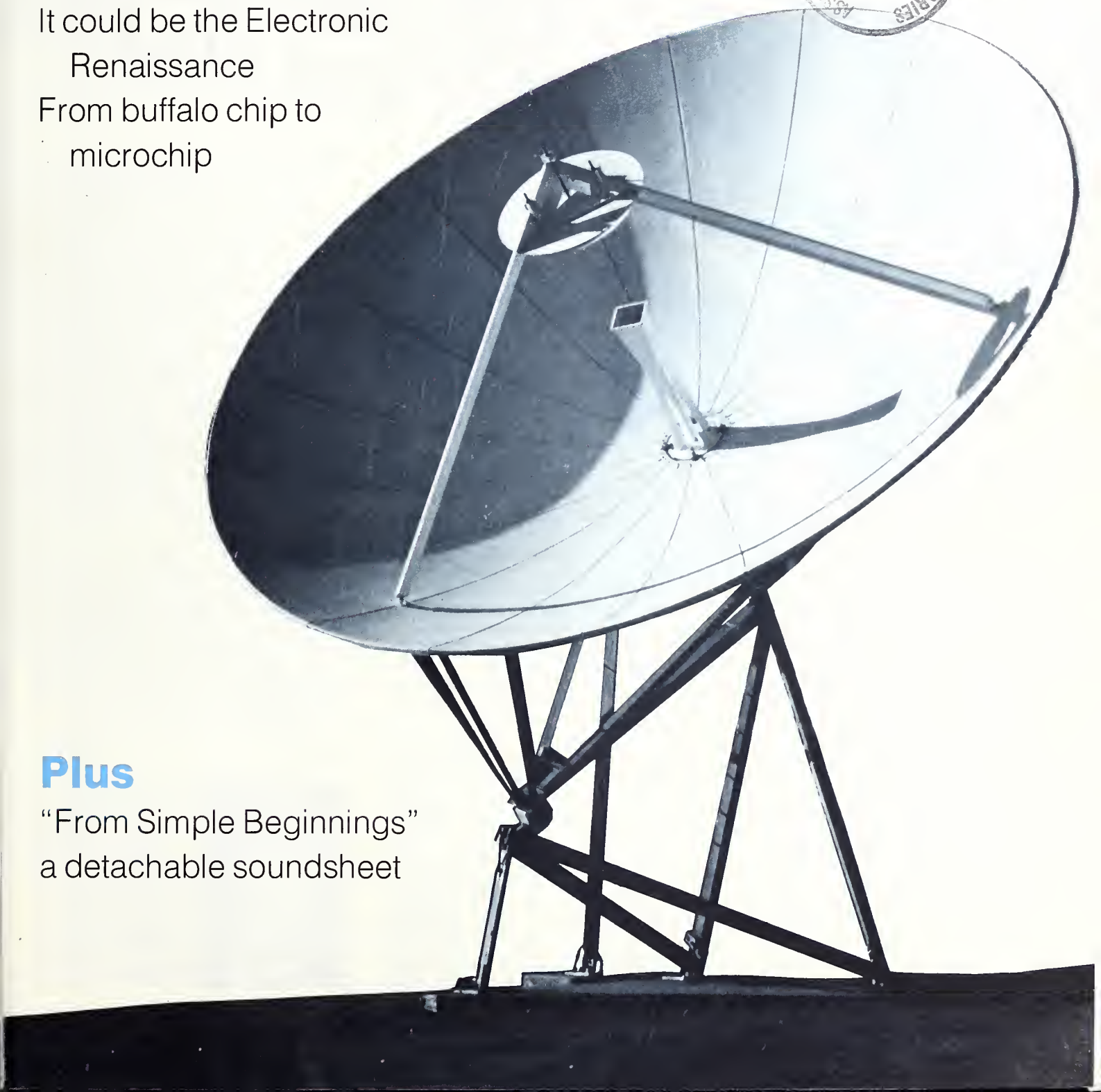

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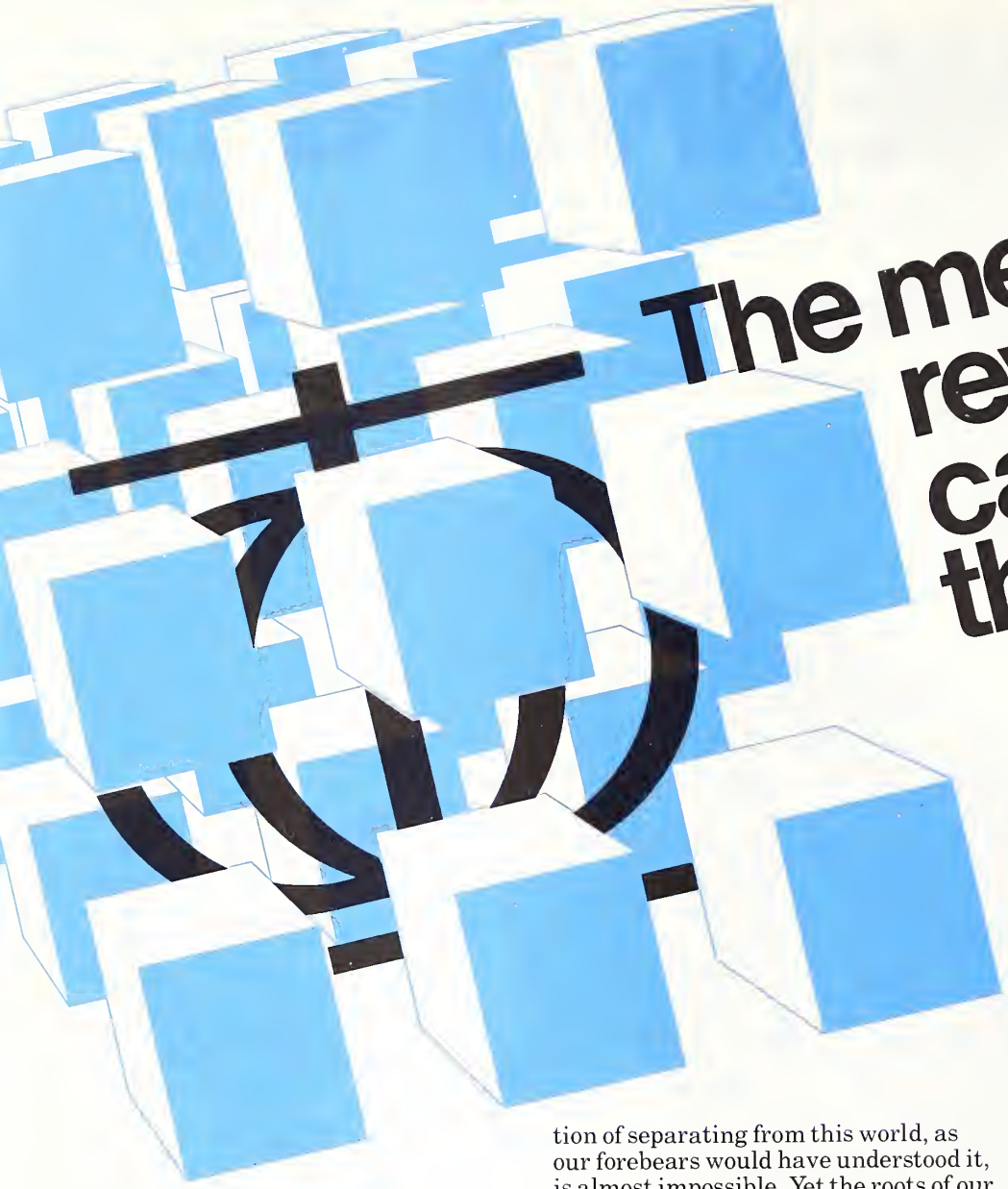

# The media revolution can serve the church

*Eric Friesen*

**Mennonites and the electronic media.** It should be simple for me, a born-and-bred Russian Mennonite from Manitoba and a professional broadcaster, to come to terms with the relationship between the Mennonite church and the electronic media. I have had a lifetime in both worlds and have also been at those places where the church and the world of radio and television intersect.

I want to work out a worldview or theology that integrates my life as a Mennonite Christian with my life as a professional broadcaster. In this I find myself challenged as never before. Perhaps the elusiveness of clear answers for me (and many others like me) lies in the way Mennonites view media. The way we use media reflects the heart of the ancient tension we have always had between withdrawing from the dominant culture around us and assimilating into it.

Electronic media technology is so powerful and so much with us that the question of separating from this world, as our forebears would have understood it, is almost impossible. Yet the roots of our non-conformist conscience run deep and we are troubled by our inability to be "not of this world." Our apparent helplessness is accentuated by the incredible complexity of communications technology, the bewildering and unpredictable changes in the media, the costs of electronic media production and the creative risks involved in producing programs that an audience will want to watch and hear.

Despite these things, I find no cause for despair. I can say with some pride and assurance that in Canada, for over 25 years, we have been quietly and deliberately finding solutions to this urgent problem of controlling the influence of mass media on our lives.

There is a profound difference between the response of Mennonites in Canada and those in the United States. U.S. Mennonites, more than Canadians, have concentrated on the development of media education, public advocacy and academic communications study, while concentrating less on the actual production of radio and television programming and the development of their own broadcasting outlets. The fruits have been noble projects like Television Awareness Training, the attempts by Mennonite communications agencies in lobbying the Federal Communications Commission in Washington and the growing record of Mennonite academic achievement in communications studies. One of the best examples of the latter is Stewart Hoover of the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, whose critique of the communications revolution from a Christian perspective, *The Electronic Giant* (Brethren Press, Elgin, Ill.), is one of the finest works of its kind. I doubt such a book could have come from a Canadian Mennonite.

**Canadian Mennonites responded one way.** The Canadian contribution to reconciling our Anabaptist heritage with the inevitable presence of the media has been substantially different. I believe it will be ultimately more useful. Canadians have assumed that they can become major participants (or "players" as they say in the trade) in the owner-

*Eric Friesen, 281 St. Clements Ave., Toronto, ON M4R 1H3, currently serves as head of Radio Features and Humanities of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He is a member of the Media Division committee for CHM.*

*Elmer Hildebrand, manager of Radio Southern Manitoba, received the International Honor Citation in 1983. This radio network began with station CFAM in Altona, Man., in 1957.*

ship, control and production of radio and, to a lesser extent, television, and thereby take some direct control of this communications revolution. This has been done in three practical and typically Mennonite ways: by developing our own alternative commercial broadcasting outlets, by developing first-rate production houses and (less deliberately) by having many of our creative young people involved in all aspects of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, considered one of the finest public broadcasting organizations in the world.

It is no coincidence that with the formation of Radio Station CFAM, Altona, Man., in 1957, came the concurrent development of some excellent Christian radio programming and the opportunity for many young people to become skilled in all aspects of radio and television. The development of this broadcasting outlet, which deliberately set out to reflect the cultural and religious aspirations of Manitoba Mennonites (but not deliberately exclude others), symbolized a recognition of the power of the new medium and the need to make it work for (instead of against) the interests of the local Mennonite community. Seen in the light of all that has happened since in the world of communications, those first steps in the late '50s seem remarkably bold and clearsighted.

Similarly, the attraction of many young Mennonite men and women to public broadcasting (particularly the CBC) is no accident. Public broadcasting has at its core the obligation of public service, of informing, enlightening and entertaining citizens for *cultural* and *social* ends rather than strictly commercial ones. Mennonites have a strong tradition of public service and a rich cultural tradition, and they understand how this springs from the core of their faith and is integrated into life around them.

I believe U.S. Mennonites would do well to consider the Canadian model for moving beyond being part of the conscience of media, to actually appropriating these powerful technologies for the preservation and development of their faith and culture. The one conclusion I miss in Hoover's otherwise excellent book is a call to do precisely this. He draws the analogy between the revolution spawned by the invention of movable type (Gutenberg) and communication technologies and argues correctly that what made the revolution was not only the existence of books but the availability of printing presses at the service of those elements of western culture (particularly the church) which were so profoundly changed. Hoover fails to draw the inevitable conclusion that for us to be beneficiaries rather than victims of the communications revolution, we too must appropriate it for our own purposes.

**Counsel for U.S. Mennonites.** There are several things U.S. Mennonites could do. They could look to the commercial model of CFAM (now a group of many stations across western Canada) and, in the deregulated broadcasting market of the United States, develop their own radio stations in major Mennonite communities. They could develop and expand their college stations into full-fledged National Public Radio affiliates, enriching both themselves and their barely surviving public broadcasting system as well. Or they could take a leap in history and develop television models of the kind described above for radio. Finally, they could consider more active and substantially funded production agencies for all communications technologies (radio, television, cable, video) through the colleges or the various Mennonite conferences. The Media Division, formerly Faith and Life Radio and Television, of the Commission on Home Ministries has, by virtue of its longstanding record of professional broadcast production, the best potential to stimulate and foster such initiatives in the General Conference.

**Let's work at it together.** I am not writing this to criticize the excellent Mennonite media work done in the United States over many decades. I do urge upon our U.S. brothers and sisters the lessons of Canadian experience. Culture, tradition, values and faith are particularly vulnerable to the powerful communications technologies now entering our homes. It is possible for a small minority to gain some control and to appropriate today's communications revolution for our own purposes. I believe it is the only way we will survive as growing Mennonite churches.

To pursue such goals will require continued vision, courage, persistence and a combined commitment of community will and financial support. In each of our major Mennonite communities there will have to be perceptive people who are willing to provide the necessary leadership.

In practical terms, that means giving our own Media Division the support and the scope to study and advise the larger constituency about communications issues and to develop strategies for using the electronic media for the church. I urge the General Conference leadership to recognize the gravity of this challenge. •

# Anticipation is a beginning to solution

*Mark Winslow*

As Christians we know one thing for sure about the future—Jesus is coming back. He's coming back to usher in his kingdom in all its fullness. Knowing that future fact helps us answer the questions of what Christ would have us do here and now.

In a world changing as rapidly as ours, we would be wise followers of Christ to anticipate where today's world is headed in the near future so we might be better equipped to be disciples in the midst of it. Change is accelerating in our time. The church and individual believers have faced change before. We have opposed it, ignored it but also given birth to it.

One recent book can help Christians ponder the social trends swirling about us. It is *Megatrends* by John Naisbitt. Naisbitt is a social forecaster and chairman of a research and consulting firm for U.S. corporations.

*Megatrends* presents 10 social trends the author believes the United States and/or the world are experiencing. These 10 new directions are grass-roots developments—true trends—says Naisbitt, as opposed to fads which are imposed from above. The 10 trends are reflected in a content analysis of U.S. and international newspapers done by Naisbitt's firm over several years.

Naisbitt says most social invention in the United States begins in just five states. California is first. Florida is second, followed by Washington, Colorado and Connecticut.

As we consider these trends, try to imagine how they could serve as obstacles or opportunities for Christians.

*Trend one.* Although many of us still assume we live in an industrial society, we have in fact changed to an economy based on the creation and distribution of information. We are in the transition period from the Industrial Age to the Information Age. Communication satellites and the computer have facilitated this. In the Information Age information will be as powerful as money was in the Industrial Age. Literacy and good education will be more important than ever. The home computer will soon be as common as the stereo music system.

Innovations in communications and computer technology will accelerate the pace of change by collapsing the "information float"—the amount of time information spends in the communication channel (the number of days a letter spends in the mail, a book spends in layout, printing and distribution, etc.).

But, as Naisbitt warns, we may be "drowning in information but starved for knowledge." At the same time literacy skills will be of paramount importance. The generation currently graduating from high schools in the United States is the first to graduate less skilled than their parents.

In the flooding information deluge just beginning, the church will have a real opportunity to teach and model true knowledge—what is truly important in

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# MEDIA MISSION:

## From Simple Beginnings with MARGARET FOTH

PLACE COIN HERE IF SOUNDSHEET SLIPS

33 1/3 RPM MONAURAL

Highlights of the past, present and future of General Conference Mennonite Church mission through media.

Media Division
Commission on Home Ministries
1984
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**THE MENNONITE,** Vol. 99, issue No. 7, March 27, 1984

life. The Judeo-Christian community has stressed literacy in past ages because we are "people of the book." This could continue to be an important contribution of the church in an increasingly under-literate age needing language skills for reading and for computer literacy.

2. As technology becomes more innovative and complex, society increasingly seeks to balance the impersonalness of high technology with the personal, aesthetic and spiritual values we are inherently hungry for. The more "high tech" hospitals have become, the less people are choosing to be born there or to die there, and they are avoiding them in between. Alternative birthing methods, home deliveries and the growing hospice movement are examples of how society is attempting to balance high technology with "high touch."

In the same vein, the more robots move into factories, the more we will compensate for the intrusion by developing "quality circles" where workers can talk about and have a greater measure of authority over the decisions, values and life of the workplace. In coming years, the church will have an opportunity to be a catalyst in shaping the human, aesthetic and spiritual values that will characterize society's attempt to humanize the high tech workplace.

3. The world is quickly moving away from many national economies to one world economy. Naisbitt says it is too late for the United States to recapture industrial supremacy because it is no longer an industrial economy. Japan is number one industrially, but that is like being "a new world champion in a declining sport."

Products manufactured in developing countries at more competitive rates are helping to cause the sunset of U.S. industry. But at the same time, information creation and processing is on the rise along with the new and promising science of gene splicing. Many industries will be globalized in the near future, the automobile industry being first. In the new world economy, notes Naisbitt, successful people will need to be fluent in three languages: English, Spanish and Computer.

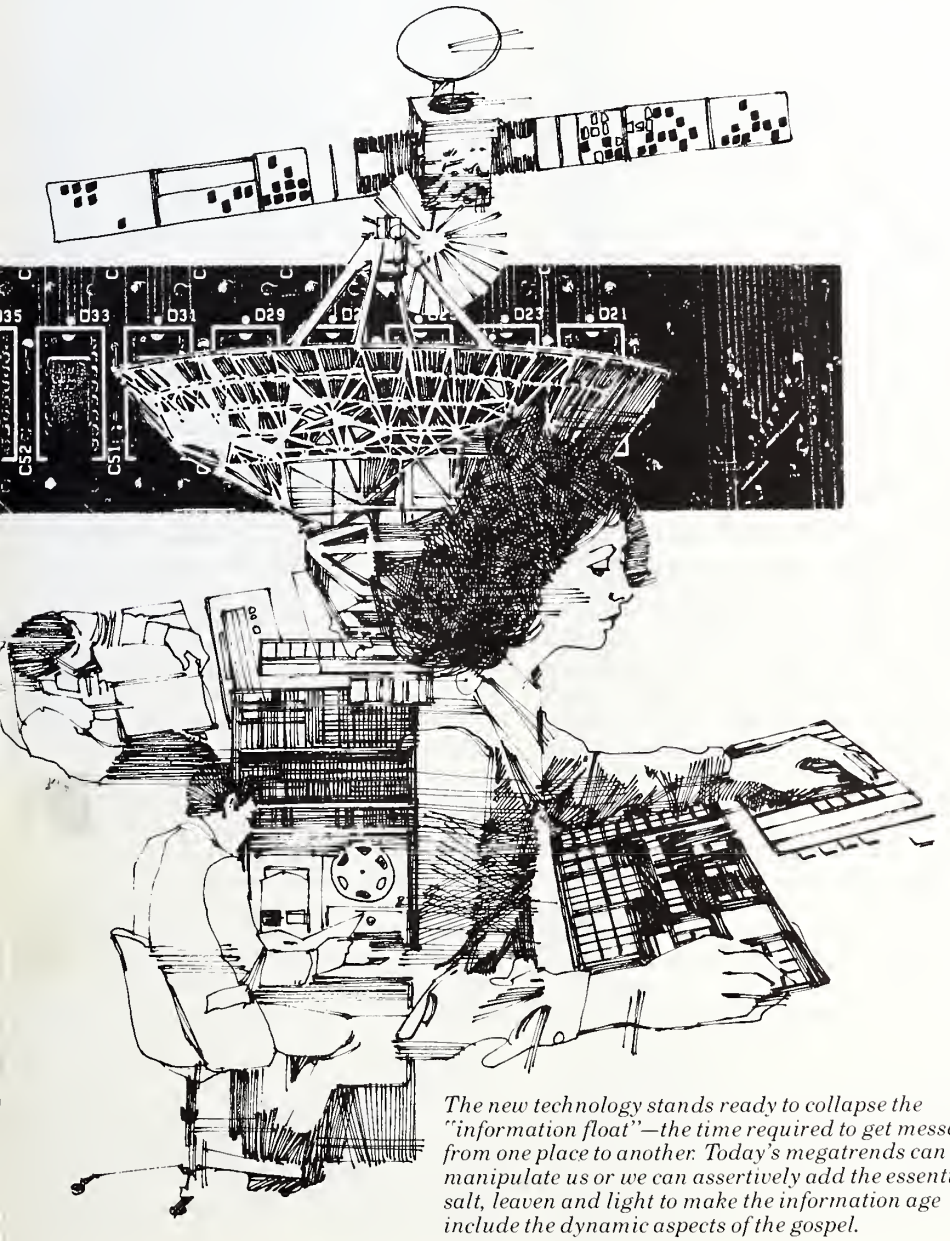
The church needs to realize that disruption of local and national economies is inevitable as the nations shift to a restructured world economy. Smashing Toyotas with sledge hammers or calling for economic "protectionism" will be futile reactions as the dynamic of capitalism begins working in a world market. As developing countries produce goods more competitively, they will drive previously competitive U.S. industries out of business. This is the law of the marketplace. Christians should recognize this inescapable trend and call upon governments to initiate educational and job training assistance to industrial workers. Retooling workers for Information Age jobs would not be as costly a solution in the long run as the burden of unemployment and welfare.

Naisbitt also notes that with traditional markets now at the saturation point, U.S. businesses are beginning to realize that helping the underdeveloped countries to develop is in the U.S. interest—in order to insure adequate markets for goods and services. Church leaders and development workers have often said that Third World development is in our long-term self-interest, and now some U.S. corporations seem to be accepting that reality.

4. There is a growing shift from short-term to long-term goals and plans. Change is occurring so fast that businesses, unions, political parties and governments must be constantly willing to reconceptualize their roles.

An example of one institution that failed to reconceptualize its role is the railroads. While the interstate highway system was built and the car, truck and plane became increasingly popular, the railroads failed to adapt. Had they rethought their role and accepted that they were in the transportation business and not just the railroad business, they might have diversified and developed into flourishing companies.

There are institutions of all kinds today that are "like dinosaurs waiting for the weather to change." Some of our churches fit into this category. They must rethink their role or become obsolete. In the face of accelerated change, both individuals and institutions who look only at the short term or profits—while ignoring the long-term trends—




*The new technology stands ready to collapse the "information float"—the time required to get messages from one place to another. Today's megatrends can manipulate us or we can assertively add the essential salt, leaven and light to make the information age include the dynamic aspects of the gospel.*

*At a time when many citizens, including Christians, have all but given up on influencing public life through the political process, the chance to have more participatory power on the state and local level is a welcome one.*

will only insure their further decline.

5. *Centralization to decentralization.* We have moved from general mass circulation magazines like *Life*, *Look* and the *Saturday Evening Post* to special interest magazines like *Runner's World* and *Beehive Management.* The same diversification is happening with pay and cable television. At the same time a new regionalism and return to more powerful state governments is occurring in the United States. Largely through local and state issues concerning energy, citizens have discovered they can have a powerful effect on local politics. At a time when many citizens, including Christians, have all but given up on influencing public life through the political process, the chance to have more participatory power on the state and local level is a welcome one.

6. *Institutional help to self-help.* "Wholeness" or "wellness" is the emerging preventive-maintenance health trend. Self-help alternatives are also being tested in education. One example is the new Mennonite Learning Center in Chicago. CMLC is a multiracial alternative Christian grade school for urban Mennonites.

In business the self-help trend is seen in fed-up corporate managers who become independent entrepreneurs. Gardening and gleaning are back in fashion. Communities are responding to crime with neighborhood watch groups and civilian patrols like the famous Guardian Angels of New York City. Food co-ops, home remodeling and renovation are examples of this trend.

7. *Representative* democracy to a *participatory* democracy. Instantaneously and widely shared information is making the idea of representative democracy obsolete, says Naisbitt. Citizens, workers, consumers and stockholders are demanding and getting a greater voice in government, business and the marketplace. Naisbitt boldly asserts, "The political left and right are dead; all the action is being generated by a radical center. . . . Within a short time, declaring oneself a strictly loyal Democrat or Republican will be openly considered a sign of narrowmindedness and limited intelligence." The shift is toward smaller political parties that are springing up in the wake of the demise of the traditional two-party system.

This growing trend toward people participating more actively in the decisions that affect them is seen in corporations becoming more participatory in response to shareholder activism. Baby-boom workers are more assertive about their rights and responsibilities to participate in the decisions affecting their workplace.

*The eighth megatrend* is the shift from traditional managerial hierarchies to networking. Networks are nothing more than people talking to each other, sharing ideas, information and resources. Networking is done through books, air travel, conferences, phone calls, papers, pamphleteering, photocopying, lectures, parties, mutual friends, grapevines, newsletters, coalitions and tapes. Using the horizontal communication of networks, the baby boom brought us the antiwar movement, the women's movement and the environmental movement. As the baby-boom generation moves into business, networks are being structured to supplement, modify or replace traditional corporate hierarchies. These modified workplace communication structures have already benefited productivity, vision and workplace harmony in Japan, and they will increasingly change the other workplaces as well.

9. *Shift in population and business* out of the Northeastern and Midwestern United States and into the West, Southwest and Florida. This involves two trends that have no cause-effect relationship. One is the decline of the industrial north. The other is the rise of the Southwest, West and Florida because of retirement communities and the sunrise of high technology industries. This shift is irreversible in our lifetime. The states growing the fastest are Florida, Texas and California. Naisbitt lists 10 cities of "great opportunity" in the Southwest and West, many of which have little or no Anabaptist witness and would be good sites for Mennonite church plantings. At the same time there will be great opportunity for city ministries in the urban areas of the Midwest and Northeast, which will continue to suffer the personal misery of economic decline.

10. *From an either/or to a multiple-option society.* Social upheaval of the '60s and quiet change during the '70s have paved the way for the '80s to be a decade of unprecedented diversity. Naisbitt calls it a "Baskin Robbins society" in which "everything comes in at least 31 flavors." Examples of this diversity are changing definitions of what constitutes a family, greater options for women and more flexibility in the workplace, a national religious revival, cable television, specialty foods and the affirmation of ethnic diversity.

If the peoples of the world are successful in getting their governments to take substantive steps to greatly reduce the threat of nuclear war, Naisbitt points to a near future fraught with both peril and promise. As always, when the social changes come, the church will oppose some trends, adapt to some and actually help give birth to others. God will be at work in the near future. *Megatrends* is a good road map for any Christian who wants to ponder what the territory might look like, based on the curves in the road today. •

# Tithing #1—I'm not a tither

*Calvin Redekop*

I have tried to keep a lid on it. Only last week a friend asked me a bit sheepishly, "Do you?" The issue creeps into conversations by insinuations and innuendos, usually by way of a back door comment. Even my pastor, when he refers to it, furtively looks around for a back door by which to retreat.

I am almost too embarrassed to ask whether you are involved too. It's not that people haven't talked about it before or that people haven't been tempted by it, and it's not that people don't feel guilty about it. Well, if you will promise not to condemn me, I'll tell you: "I don't tithe."

Now that my dark secret is out, I will say a few more words. The tithe has been a stickler for many centuries. The Jews were told to tithe and didn't. Jesus talked about the right of people to gather remnants of the harvest and apparently incurred the wrath of the farmers. Ananias and Sapphira were killed for not giving a 100 percent tithe. The Roman church developed an elaborate tithing scheme until Luther railed against the enthusiastic priests for passing the hat and exploiting the poor for their own opulent living. And according to some scholars (non-Mennonite at that), the straw that broke the dam of Anabaptist opposition to the Roman Catholic hierarchy was the tithe which the clerics were exacting from the poor peasants (Haas). The tithe seems to have been the source of some of the most bitter conflicts in the Christian church (Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, pp. 831, 1009).

Historically the tithe has been used by the ecclesiastical structures for resources to operate religious programs. Many times it has been exploitative as well as an effective procedure based on "biblical teachings." TV and radio evangelists (see "Merchandising the Gospel" in *The Mennonite*, Nov. 3, 1982) have understood the idea of the tithe well and have promoted it as God-ordained piety and a lucrative means to raise gobs of money.

Maybe there are even religious reasons for refusing to pay the tithe, at least sometimes. And who among us would be so bold as to express filio impiety by suggesting our Anabaptist forefathers (young men in their mid-20s) were wrong in protesting the tithe?

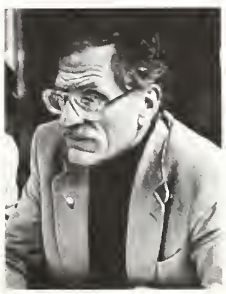
**Where are we then regarding the tithe?** We need to make clear that the misuse of the tithe does not make it immoral. The misuse of preaching does not make the role of preaching unethical. The idea of the tithe may be right, but this needs more discussion.

Secondly, we need to look at the biblical reasons why tithing was instituted. The Old Testament prescribes it to provide resources for the work of God's kingdom (Numbers 18:21) and as an act of worship to God (Genesis 14:20). The only reference to tithing by Jesus is apparently a negative one in which he condemns the Pharisees for tithing but missing the weightier parts of the law (Matthew 23:23).

Paul was more forthright, suggesting that the Christian worker is worthy of support, although the tithe is not mentioned in this or any other connection (1 Corinthians 9:1-14). From these allusions and others it appears that the purpose of giving is to promote the work of the kingdom.

**So why has there been so much protest to the tithe in Christian history?** Evidently believers have often felt that the tithe was misused. Rather than being used for the propagation of the gospel, the tithe has been exacted from those with bigger means to support the church programs which they considered unnecessary. I have friends who do not feel much if any guilt for not supporting or Christian obligation to support some of the religious entrepreneurs who are jamming the mass media with their slick propaganda and their "creative programs."

**What about congregational activities which need support?** Insofar as they are Spirit-led activities, arrived at by the consensus of the Christian community—meaning "it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"—they should be supported. Does that mean I must tithe? Not necessarily. What "out" do I have except simple greed and avarice? I believe tithing is unbiblical. But let me explain in the next installment. The phone is ringing. . . . *First of two articles*



*Calvin Redekop is professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.*

# We shape it or it shapes us

*Diane Zimmerman Umble*

**Television is more than entertainment.** "I'd never thought about it before" is a statement often heard following a Television Awareness Training session. Over the past six years TAT leaders have worked with parents, teenagers, teachers and pastors to assess the influence of television on personal values, an influence many have never noticed.

Television has become so commonplace that we seldom reflect on its impact in our lives. Television dominates our leisure time and changes our living patterns—when we eat, when we go to bed. Our expectations of lawyers and doctors, of pastors and law enforcement officers are shaped by television. It is a major force in the socialization of children and of ethnic groups. It shapes our perceptions of other peoples and places. It is our window to world events. We place great faith in its reports. One single piece of technology changes the way we live and shapes the way we think.

**The technology revolution.** Our society is in the midst of a communications revolution; we are shifting from an industrial to an information age. One key component of the new age is television. Another is the telephone. A third is the computer. The television and telephone are present in almost every U.S. and Canadian home, making the shift to new applications of information technology relatively easy.

Just as television changes the way we live, often without our awareness, so the applications of new technologies will bring new changes. These changes deserve our attention. We must become more critical consumers—raise questions and make deliberate choices.

Television is expected to increase its role in our daily lives. Linked by cable, satellites and telephone to home computers and business computers, the "tube" will become a tool for information processing as well as for entertainment. Systems already exist which allow families to shop, make travel reservations, bank, place bets, research, check the weather and stock reports, play games and participate in opinion polls through their TV sets. Our homes can be linked to security and fire alarm systems through the same cable that provides TV programming.

Options for TV programming will range from pornography to preaching, from punk rock to orchestra, from boxing to needlepoint. Education programs are being envisioned for young and old. News services will allow us consumers to select the kind of news we wish to see and the language in which we want it spoken.

New technologies will introduce changes into our family structures, into the ways we learn and worship, into the ways we work and the ways we govern. French sociologist Jacques Ellul says that all technological progress exacts a price. It both adds and subtracts, raising some problems and solving others.

**What can we do?** Mennonites must find new ways to maintain distinctives. What is the simple life in the information age? How do we build and maintain community in a culture of specialization and individualism? How do we define our central values in a culture where norms and values are being redefined?

In our society we must determine who has the authority to make policy decisions about how new technologies will be developed and applied. How do we prevent the creation of a society of information "haves" and "have-nots"? Will these tools be applied to social needs or is commercial success the primary criterion on which to judge them? Who will profit? Who will benefit? Who will speak for the public interest? Who has access to communication channels? How much government control is appropriate?

Many of these choices are immediate. The questions must be faced now so that we can influence the answers.

To begin, we must become better informed. We must determine which values are priorities and must be preserved. Make use of the resources the church is already providing through media education efforts and staff with expertise in this area. Keep abreast of developments by reading newspapers and magazines. Follow the policymaking process and make your opinions known to those involved. Recognize that the introduction of new technologies will bring changes and require choices.

Raising the following questions may help us as we make choices more intentionally. Does this technology contribute to the building of relationships or the deterioration of them? Does it encourage the valuing of people over tools and processes? Does this technology enhance individualism at the expense of community? Does this technology protect the rights of the powerless or consolidate the strength of those already powerful? Does it preserve our freedom or limit our freedom now and in the future?

Decisions are being made today that will shape tomorrow's world. The information age will transform the way we live and all that we know. As a people, as a church, we cannot afford to say, "I never thought about it." We must think and prepare to act. The opportunity to shape the new world with the salt and leaven of Christ is in our hands.

*Diane Zimmerman Umble is assistant professor of communications at Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117.*

**MEDIA EDUCATION RESOURCES:**

**The following people are available to GC churches for workshops on awareness, electronic church and other related topics: Roger Groening (Manitoba), Paul Karstedt (Pacific District), Erwin and Margaret Miller (Eastern District), Mary Anne Moser (Central District), Frank Ward and Naomi Wollmann (Western District). Others in Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia will soon be available.**

**Inquiries for media education resources and workshops should go to: Barth Hague, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, telephone (219) 294-7523.**

# We're doing it together

*Kenneth J. Weaver*

Bernie Wiebe, current editor of *The Mennonite*, is the father of inter-Mennonite broadcasting. As director of the Mennonite Radio Mission, Winnipeg, Bernie was asked by the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba to open conversation with Mennonite Church broadcasters to look at possible cooperation. A September 1966 letter from Bernie to Mennonite Broadcasts, Inc., Harrisonburg, Va., proposed a meeting suggesting that "in fellowship . . . we might find some clearer direction regarding the way we ought to go in the ministry through mass media." Up to that point individual Mennonite broadcasters had gone their own way with no networking.

The suggestion brought a favorable response and a meeting was held on May 10-11, 1967, in Chicago, to which all known Mennonite-related broadcasters were invited. Fifteen people participated in that "Mennonite Mass Communications Consultation."

From that first beginning, a cooperative stance has continued. In addition to sharing who we were and what we were doing, participants in that first session identified new areas in which they wanted to move. In 1967 each of us was challenged by television but had feelings of inadequacy in knowing how to get started.

We didn't consider any specific plans in that first meeting. We did agree to plan for a "Mennonite television study seminar" with resource persons who were experienced in television and could help us find our way.

*Preparations being made to film a segment of a TV spot in the "Exploding the Myth" campaign, a 1983 cooperative media project*

Later the General Conference, Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church groups expressed interest in producing TV spots and chose to pool resources and work together in the name of "the Mennonite churches."

The Mennonite Council on Mass Communications was also formed in November 1967. Jacob Schmidt (MB), Bernie Wiebe (GC) and I (MC) were appointed to the steering committee. The MCMC provided the basis for fellowship and consultaiton with a wide group of communication personnel beyond the staff of the three denominational agencies.

From 1969 through 1977, the GC, MB and MC broadcast agencies cooperated in the production and release of seven series of TV spots and at least half a dozen radio spot productions, including the award-winning "Choice."

This cooperative production group became known as the Inter-Mennonite Television Group and was later reorganized as the Inter-Mennonite Media Group. Mission executives and media staff agreed to use IMMG "as the structure through which we (GC, MB, MC) will handle all our cooperative interests and activities" in broadcast media. A few years later the Church of the Brethren joined IMMG.

From this inter-Mennonite broadcast relationship a similar organization was formed in Canada to work with unique Canadian broadcast requirements. Mennonite Radio and Television Council was formed by Canadian groups that worked cooperatively.

During the early 1980s IMMG developed plans for a one-hour TV special designed for use by Mennonite congregations as an evangelistic outreach. That project was later canceled because of an insufficient commitment of funds. IMMG is now developing a major church-wide consultation for May 1984. The event will explore the future for Mennonite involvement in video communication.

In addition to the cooperative work accomplished through IMMG, there have been occasions when two or more agency members teamed together for special projects. Most recently, the GC's Media Division and the MC's Media Ministries cooperated in the "Exploding the Myth" TV spots and the "Stopping the Nuclear Clock" radio spots in 1983. Both releases won Gabriel Awards for excellence in public service broadcasting. Neither campaign would have been possible without the cooperation of our two denominations.

*A scene from the TV spot "Great to be Alive"*

I believe this sense of cooperation will continue to grow. The call from the 1983 GC triennial conference and MC General Assembly is clear in defining cooperation as a desired trend. This has brought a new level of discussion between our groups to be fully aware of each other's work and to cooperate where there is opportunity. With the tremendous challenge of the communication revolution, it seems only fitting that we join hands as brothers and sisters in this important part of kingdom building.

*Kenneth J. Weaver is director of Media Ministries, Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 1252, Harrisonburg, VA 22901. Weaver also serves as chair of the Inter-Mennonite Media Group.*

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:11

# The Foundation Series

## The Revised Foundation Series for Children—the fulfillment of the vision

**Basic objectives of the revision**

- To more effectively help volunteer teachers guide the learning experiences of the students.
- To be more useful to growing congregations, and to congregations which minister to children from non-church backgrounds.
- To support families in their nurturing responsibility of their children.
- To relate the work of the Sunday school to the ministry of the total congregation.

**Improvements in the curriculum**

- There are some changes in the art and illustrations.
- Activities have been added which link the family to the Sunday school.
- Teaching methods are more adequately explained.
- Faith concepts have been simplified to the appropriate age level of the child.
- Charts which provide an overview of the quarter in terms of scope, materials, and activities have been added.
- Alternate suggestions have been sharpened to help meet more needs—short class time, small class, etc.

Available for use in the congregation in September 1984.

**Commission on Education**
General Conference Mennonite Church
722 Main Street, Box 347
Newton, Kansas 67114
316/283-5100

# Commissions approve development plan

Newton, Kan.—The General Conference's Council of Commissions, meeting here March 2-6, gave its approval to the outline of a multifaceted development plan which may, by the 1986-89 triennium, lead to a fund-raising campaign with a goal of somewhere between 10 and 20 million dollars.

That campaign, however, would proceed only after a period of intensive "listening" to congregations, a feasibility study and consultations with Canadian, district and provincial conference leadership have been completed.

Implementation of the plan is to take place in stages, allowing for re-evaluation, alteration or even scrapping the project at a number of points within the next 2½ years. Delegates to the 1986 triennial sessions in Saskatoon would give final approval to its fund-raising portion.

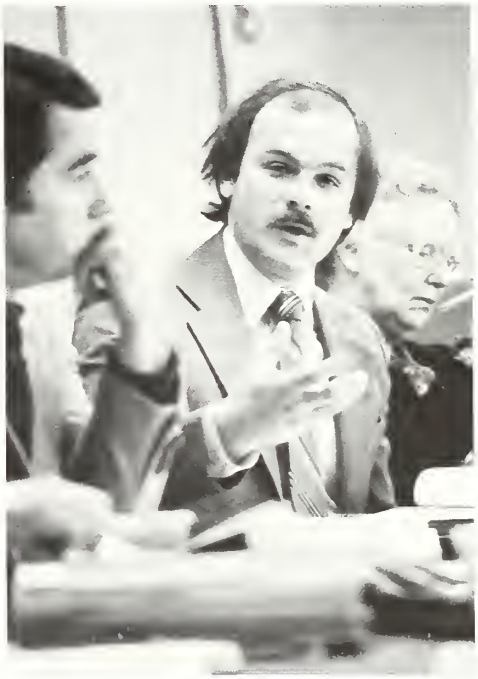
"The real strength of this plan is that each phase can be of enormous benefit to the conference in and of itself," said Carol Suter, Pandora, Ohio, who chairs the committee which prepared the proposal. "The visitation with churches and the feasibility study will be of great value in improving two-way communication in the conference, regardless of whether or not we eventually proceed with the fund-raising campaign."

The plan's first steps, endorsed by commissions during their annual meetings, are to hire a development director and communications director to work alongside stewardship director Raymond Frey in dialoguing about the conference's work with districts, provinces and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. Those bodies would eventually be invited to submit projects to be included in the fund drive.

Although no one voted against the plan at the Council's plenary sessions, several cautions were raised, mostly about the process and approach for such a venture.

"I have no trouble with the feasibility study," said Ken Bauman of Berne, Ind., "but I am somewhat uncomfortable with the Fifth Avenue approach. It needs to have integrity and there needs to be integrity within its leadership, warranting the confidence of our people." Elaine Rich, Bluffton, Ohio, added, "We will need to think in terms of inverted pyramids, of servant leadership, of 'going up' to our people for direction, rather than 'going down' to them for support."

The commissions ratified a budget of $5,408,000 for 1984, requiring an increase in giving of 8 percent over 1983.



*Richard Early, Souderton, Pa., expresses the need for better listening to congregations.*

### General Board

The talk about "listening to our churches," which had pervaded discussion of the development plan, also became the dominant theme of the General Board's meetings.

Recognizing the recent move by Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Salem, Ore., to withdraw from the conference and the possibility that others might do the same because of theological differences within the larger church, GB agreed that new attempts must be made to hear the diverse concerns of individuals and congregations from all parts of the conference.

After hearing a highly positive report from Ben Sprunger about the "Conversations on Faith" meetings held just days earlier by the Mennonite Church at the Laurelville Church Center, the board decided to hold its own "Dialogue on Faith," modeled closely after the MC event. Sprunger was the GC observer at Laurelville.

"Dialogue on Faith" is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 24-26 in a retreat setting somewhere in the Chicago area. It will gather about 150 people "from the full General Conference theological spectrum" for more than two days of not only talking about differences such as biblical interpretation but also reflecting on the common ground of faith.

*Carol Suter presents the General Conference development plan to General Board. Listening in are (left to right) GB members Jake Harms, John R. Friesen and Irene Dunn.*

### Commission on Overseas Mission

The Commission on Overseas Mission moved to place up to five missionaries in South Korea as soon as possible.

In August 1983, Burton and Elnore Yost went to Korea for a six-month assignment of teaching, serving with the churches and exploring the need for Mennonite missionaries there.

**"In the Image of God"** is the theme for the seventh Women in Ministry Conference, which will take place May 4-6 at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church. The keynote speaker will be Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, professor of English at William Paterson College in New Jersey. A distinguished scholar and speaker, Mollenkott is the author of various books. Over 20 workshops are being planned. The cost of registration and meals for the full conference is $35 (U.S.) before April 15 and $40 (U.S.) after that date. For more information write Women in Ministry Conference, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

**The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops** has asked President Reagan to "apply the full force" of U.S. law to stop "the seemingly unrestricted flow of U.S.-produced pornographic material into our country." In a letter to Reagan, the bishops said that the "ever-increasing influx of abusive and degrading material through the mail and over the airwaves seriously impedes our efforts to uphold the dignity of all men and women and to promote people's appreciation for the personal and social value of their sexuality."

**Mennonite Family History,** an illustrated quarterly on Mennonite, Amish and Brethren genealogy and family history, began its third year of publication in January. This 40-page magazine concentrates on the early Swiss and southern German immigrants who primarily settled in southeastern Pennsylvania in the late 1600s and 1700s, although other articles feature later immigrants, including the Russian Mennonites. A one-year subscription is $12.50 (U.S.), $23.50 (U.S.) for two years, available from MFH, Box 171, Elverson, PA 19520-0171.

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The Yosts reported to COM that workers should be placed in Korea immediately. While Korean churches are still growing rapidly, some of the national leaders request Mennonite help in teaching and modeling discipleship, Believers' Church concepts like mutual caring and service, and in the peace witness. Burton Yost said he believes that while COM can add these dimensions to Korean churches, Mennonites would be able to learn and benefit from the Korean examples of evangelism, devotional life and zeal.

Another item that has been on the COM agenda for several years is to have at least one staff person in Canada. At this year's meeting a committee of four was named to develop a job description and to make such a placement within the next two to four years.

Among the reasons for this move is the need to have an ongoing overseas mission voice among the Canadian churches. More than one-third of the GC membership is in Canada.

Other COM actions included approval of an interim statement on communicating crises that occur overseas, endorsement of the India church's plans to sell some of the Korba land, guidelines for theological study programs through which overseas nationals come to America for training, and new overseas personnel.

Harris and Christine Waltner to pastoral work in Lesotho, Steven and Judy Harder to medical/public health in Upper Volta and Evelyn Riediger to public health in Upper Volta are appointments subject to approval by the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission board. Lois Stolifer was assigned to nursing administration at Mennonite Christian Hospital in Taiwan.

A total budget of $3,564,504 was approved for 1984. This requires $9,630 each day of the year, Erwin Rempel, COM executive secretary, told the commission. Jake Harms, chairman of

*COM took time out from meetings to help veteran missionary Augusta Schmidt (bottom center) celebrate her 90th birthday. She served under COM in India from 1927-57.*

COM, concluded the annual meeting with a challenge to go home and boldly tell of the privilege to give of "prayers, money and lives" in carrying the Good News to the whole world.

**Commission on Home Ministries**

Faced with a deficit budget of $42,000, the future of Commission on Home Ministries programs became an underlying concern at the Council of Commissions meetings. "The problem is that there's too much energy and vision and not enough bucks," said commission member Dorothy Nickel Friesen.

During a closed session, commission members decided to drop CHM's congregational life department and to cut all other programs except Mennonite Indian Leaders Council (MILC) by 13 percent across the board in order to meet the 1984 budget.

*Ivorie Lowe (left) and Don Fry of CHM*

A $30,000 above-the-budget request for the Student Aid for Non-registrants Fund was approved by the General Board, as well as a plan to take costs for the Missionary Supplemental Retirement Fund from the trust fund reserves.

The majority of CHM U.S. time focused on a review of the MILC program. While several commission members asked whether CHM would be pulling back in the areas of leadership and financial support, MILC staff cautioned against a move in that direction.

"We are deeply concerned about the ability of our people to support mission work," said Ted Risingsun of Montana. Willis Busenitz, MILC chairperson, also wondered if it was realistic to expect leadership from the Indians when "we have a pattern of 80 years that's very difficult to change."

Both Canadian and U.S. commission members expressed ambivalence about the CHM U.S. structure in an evaluation which followed the MILC presentation. "Now we've got it in black and white, but we're not sure where to go," said Paul Boschman.

In other actions, a new one-quarter-time position in Hispanic Ministries, as a recruiter of students for pastoral training, was approved by the commission and filled by Marco Guete.

**Commission on Education**

Sitting for part of the time as a full commission and part of the time as separate publication and education divisions, the Commission on Education heard that the revision of the Foundation Series for Children under the leadership of Edna Dyck was completed. They also heard with regrets the resignation of general editor Elizabeth Yoder.

To be staffed by full-time appointments in 1984 and 1985 will be the positions of children's and adult education

**"In the Image of God"** is the theme for the seventh Women in Ministry Conference, which will take place May 4-6 at Harrisonburg (Va.) Mennonite Church. The keynote speaker will be Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, professor of English at William Paterson College in New Jersey. A distinguished scholar and speaker, Mollenkott is the author of various books. Over 20 workshops are being planned. The cost of registration and meals for the full conference is $35 (U.S.) before April 15 and $40 (U.S.) after that date. For more information write Women in Ministry Conference, 1251 Virginia Ave., Harrisonburg, VA 22801.

**Mennonites** in the Newton, Kan., area are using a series of TV and radio spots in addition to newspaper ads to convey messages about the Christian faith to their community. Scott Bonnet, a sophomore at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., organizes the effort sponsored by the Tabor Mennonite Church through its peace and social concerns committee. "We are now looking at buying a half hour of prime time on television at a cost of $5,000," he said. The group plans to focus the program on issues relating to Central America. The committee keeps the cost down by using free labor and receiving donations.

**Several Mennonites** are involved in public radio station KHCC-FM in Hutchinson, Kan. General manager David Horning is a member of First Mennonite Church in Hutchinson; music director Ken Krehbiel is a member of First Mennonite Church in Moundridge, Kan.; and Shirley King, on the Bethel College music faculty in North Newton, Kan., is a volunteer who produces the program "Organ Loft." Public radio is the fastest growing medium in Kansas.

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secretaries. Half of the funding for the children's education position will be supplied by Women in Mission.

Two programs, Perspective '84 and Consultation '84, were discussed, the former in evaluation, the latter in anticipation.

Two reference councils were confirmed, one for family life, the other for students and young adults. A task force was also authorized to investigate the efficacy and feasibility of continuing the work camp program which, numerically, has seen a decline in recent years.

The publication division discussed the policy of authorized translations of its materials and looked favorably upon cooperative Mennonite-Anabaptist publications. A Bible survey course and a series of home Bible studies are to be published.

The commission further agreed to a final write-off of debts incurred by the Fellowship Bookcentre venture in Winnipeg and to pay its debts to the Mennonite Brethren Conference in connection with this joint venture.

The General Board also authorized COE to continue participation in the new Brethren/Mennonite hymnal project, but the financial obligation to this project is to be outside of the commission's normal budget.

**Division of Administration**

The development plan became the main focus of DA's meetings. With the plan adopted by the Council, the division now faces the task of hiring a development director.

DA recommended a 5 percent increase in staff salaries and a 4 percent budget increase (8 percent over actual income). Yet the failure to meet budget in the past three years and the need for more money served as a backdrop for many of the discussions. At the same time, an optimism prevailed that once the development plan is under way, the conference's fortunes may change.

*In a COE session, Ben Sprunger (right) responds to the development plan as Tim Epp studies the proposal.*

Ray Frey's work as stewardship director was scrutinized and affirmed. He reported plans for a "Stewards in Mission Program," which will include a 2½-day workshop that will teach pastors and lay leaders the principles of stewardship so that they can teach these principles in their congregations.

DA played a conciliation role by recommending a temporary step in regard to whether the Missionary Supplemental Retirement Fund should be a part of either or both COM's and CHM's budgets. The plan, later endorsed by the General Board, was to use trust funds designated to these two commissions to pay what is needed in 1984, with COM paying 60 percent and CHM 40 percent, which reflects the percentages of retired missionaries receiving help. This will prevent the deficit from increasing. Paying off the fund's deficit, DA members argued, might be an item for a future fund drive.

In 1983 Women in Mission contributed over $19,000 to the fund. COM and CHM will make up the difference in what WM's 1984 contribution doesn't cover of the MSRF operating expenses.

Church Extension Services approved a loan of $70,000 to Silver Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., as a line of credit which is good for one year at 8 percent interest, plus a loan of $3,260 to Colombia Mennonite Church in La Mesa, Colombia. The latter is to be repaid over a five-year period, with COM guaranteeing the loan at the exchange rate effective when the loan is negotiated.

**District/CMC officers meet**

"The thing I've enjoyed in getting together is the casual talking about our problems and our joys too," said Al Heer, who chaired the meeting of area conference officers on Sunday afternoon.

Reporting for the Pacific District, Heer noted that although Emmanuel Church has left the conference, seven new fellowships have recently joined. He said that the new group Adam Liu started only two years ago now has an attendance of 130.

Western District president Don Schmidt talked about a stewardship effort, inter-Mennonite cooperation in the Rocky Mountain/Denver area and a spirituality task force.

"Church planting has become a strong emphasis," Eastern District vice president David Bartow said. EDC now has two new Hispanic congregations. A part-time peace/youth worker is being sought.

Jake Fransen, chairperson of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, talked about finances and said funding is coming in well. CMC recently committed itself to an every home plan with the *Mennonite Reporter*.

Central District president James Waltner said that CDC has a growing number of dual-conference churches. Conversations about an inter-Mennonite structure are going on, but Waltner said he was unsure about the outcome of these discussions.

Aaron Glanzer, Northern District president, said the Hispanic work in Minneapolis is going well. The district voted for a half-time youth worker, but, he added, they need a church planter.

The district/CMC officers spent a good

**Portugal's parliament** in January passed a law to make abortions easier to obtain in the mostly Roman Catholic country. Catholic leaders strongly opposed the changes and urged the faithful to not support politicans and parties which support the relaxation. The changes do not legalize abortion but allow prosecution for abortion to be waived in cases such as danger to a mother's life or fetal deformity.

**John A. Esau**, pastor of Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan., has been appointed director of Ministerial Leadership Services for the General Conference Mennonite Church, effective Jan. 1, 1985. He will succeed Jacob T. Friesen in that role. A graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Esau earned a master of theology degree from United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Minneapolis, in 1972. Esau served as pastor of Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, from 1961-71 and as interim instructor at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, from 1968-69. He has held his present position at the Bethel College Church since 1971, while serving as a part-time instructor at the college from 1971-77. John and Bernice (Klaassen) Esau have three children: David, Sheryl and Keith.

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deal of time discussing the proposed General Conference development plan. There were varying degrees of support, although response was generally favorable.

**Women in Mission**

In her opening message at the Women in Mission annual meetings, Lora Oyer, president, reminded council members that the goals set for the decade are still relevant and need emphasis. Efforts during the '83-'86 triennium will be directed toward (1) working and praying for peace, (2) relating to the hurting and lonely, (3) developing women's gifts. Throughout the meetings suggestions were made for pursuing these goals and telling the WM story better. The executive and staff will be visiting the districts and provinces through 1986 to help keep the lines of communication open.

A high point for the literature committee was recognizing the 10th anniversary of *Window to Mission*. Over the years, Jeannie Zehr has edited 53 issues and will continue in that role. WM also announced that the theme of the magazine for 1984-85 will be "Declaring God's Love," based on Psalm 96:3.

Joan Wiebe, WM coordinator, was happy to report that 101.4 percent of the 1983 financial goal was met. The budget for this year has been increased about 7 percent to $250,500. Material aid and cash given during 1983 totaled over $1,227,409, or about $125 per member. Wiebe expressed her appreciation for the support the women have given.

Women in Mission will continue to help fund the three commissions and the seminary. Among the projects are (1) COM—Spouses of pastors from overseas will again receive travel aid and/or scholarships for education; (2) COE—A secretary for children's education will be hired and WM will fund half of the expenses for the next three years; (3) CHM—Funds for church planting will be solicited, and districts and provinces will be encouraged to sponsor "Parenting for Peace and Justice" workshops. One such workshop was conducted on Friday evening by Gloria Miller and her daughter, Kim Luke; (4) AMBS—Larger day-care facilities are needed for children of seminary students. Some of the WM funds will be used for renovations.

At the wrap-up luncheon on Monday, tribute was paid to Lora Oyer for her term of service as president of WM, while Elsie Flaming, Leamington, Ont., was welcomed as the new president.

*General Conference communications staff, including Larry Cornies (GB), Bernie Wiebe (COM), Carla Reimer (CHM), Gerhard Ens (COE), Gordon Houser (DA), Marion Keeney Preheim (District/CMC) and Sharon Sommer (WM)*


## Leading minister needed

Effective summer 1985 or negotiable

**First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg,** requires leading minister (Aeltester) fluent in English and German.

Please contact:
Vic Wieler, Chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.

## Administrative position

Secretary for Children's Education
Commission on Education
General Conference Mennonite Church

**Responsible for** resourcing congregations and congregational leaders involved in Christian education of children, coordination and nurture of Foundation Series resource persons, and development and coordination of curriculum for children.

**Requirements include:** administrative and relational skills, theological training, experience and expertise in Christian education.

**Beginning date:** Immediately

**Apply to:**
J. W. Sprunger, Executive Secretary
Commission on Education
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
Telephone (316) 283-5100.

## Communications director

General Conference Mennonite Church

New position available **summer 1984**

**Training and/or experience** in print and non-print media required. Master's degree in communications preferred.

Apply by sending resume to:
General Secretary
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-5100.

## Editorial position

General Editor
Commission on Education
General Conference Mennonite Church

**Responsible for** editorial oversight of all the publications of the Commission on Education, including books and curriculum, and for the administration of the COE editorial office.

**Qualifications:** This person will need administrative, editorial, journalistic and relational skills.

**Beginning date:** July 1984

**Apply to:**
J. W. Sprunger, Executive Secretary
Commission on Education
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
Telephone (316) 283-5100.

**An Orthodox Jewish scholar** tells in a new book why he believes that the resurrection of Jesus was a historical fact. But the author, Pinchas Lapide, a specialist in the New Testament, who lives and teaches in West Germany, flatly denies that Jesus was the Messiah long awaited by Jews or the divine Son of God. Lapide concedes Jesus could be the Messiah of the gentile church. In the book *The Resurrection of Jesus: A Jewish Perspective* (Augsburg) Lapide argues that the Easter event was "primarily and chiefly a Jewish faith experience."

**A weekend of learning** about aids in music and worship for Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia musicians climaxed with putting together those elements in a hymnfest and mass choir concert at the Abbotsford (B.C.) Arts Center on Jan. 29. Guest director for the mass choir of some 80 singers was Orlando Schmidt, professor of music at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., and currently on sabbatical leave in Berkeley, Calif. The retreat also included sessions on "Contemporary Singing in the Worship Service," "Singing from the Mennonite Hymnal and "The Arts and Worship."

**On Jan. 22, 16 metric tons** of dry milk from Canada left Miami on its way to Haiti, reported John Hostetler, director of Mennonite Central Committee material aid. The milk was part of a larger shipment to Haiti that included 20 tons of Kansas wheat and 20 tons of Michigan beans donated by the Apostolic Christian Church there. Eldon Stoltzfus, MCC worker in Haiti, reported that the past year had been difficult for Haitians living in the Artibonite Valley because of prolonged drought.

# Saskatchewan conference celebrates silver anniversary

Rosthern, Sask.—The Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan met here for its annual sessions Feb. 24-25. This year's sessions marked the 25th anniversary for CMS.

Both the business agenda and the inspirational input were geared to express the 1984 conference theme, "Looking Back with Thankfulness/Looking Ahead with Confidence" (Colossians 3:12-17).

CMS held its first session in 1959. Henry Funk, Drake, Sask., in a presentation entitled "Reflections," reviewed the conference's history.

Compared to other provincial conferences, CMS is young. Reasons for the delay in starting the structure were the existence of a strong, vibrant Saskatchewan Youth Organization and a well-established ministers' and deacons' organization.

Those two groups seemed to meet the needs of the Saskatchewan congregations and so, Funk stated, on repeated occasions during the '40s and '50s, deliberate decisions were made not to start a provincial conference.

However, in 1959 CMS was born. The original vision still undergirds the conference goal—to help a people with a common faith unite and be involved in a common task, seeking to experience genuine Christian fellowship.

Funk cited the following as major changes CMS has faced in the past quarter century: (1) urbanization (today 36.6 percent of CMS's 5,245 members are city dwellers), (2) affluence, (3) language (the protection that the German language gave us as a people has passed in one generation), (4) paid ministry (33 out of 42 congregations have full-time or part-time salaried pastors), (5) television (the effect it has on our lifestyle), (6) family breakdown (we are part of a permissive society).

Bernie Wiebe, editor of *The Mennonite*

*Education committee members try to send the message that their programs mean people.*

and guest speaker at the sessions, engaged listeners in the task of "looking back" and "looking ahead." Hebrews 11 served as a basis for his two presentations. In "looking back," he considered both the heroes of faith in the Bible and that great cloud of witnesses in today's world. He reminded the congregation that the Jesus way is the pilgrim way.

In "looking ahead," Wiebe encouraged the assembled to reach for new levels of confidence as members of God's family of faith. "The gospel always stretches our imagination if we permit it to do so," said Wiebe. Faith enables the believer to move and live in life's complexities that seem to go beyond reason or sense. Not only are believers to be a family of faith but also a faithmaking family, he said.

Business agenda included reporting by the missions, service, education, Women in Mission and camp coordinating committees. This being a year of celebration, most of the committees included a brief historical overview of their work. The education committee presented the premiere showing of "Three Parables About Teaching," directed by Dick Epp and narrated by Alan Klassen. In so doing, they presented some excellent teaching of their own.

The most recent project of the missions committee is the AMOS program (Asian Ministry of Saskatchewan). David Chiu, director of the project, shared his present involvement and future plans while being interviewed by Helen Funk.

The Christian service committee report included information on the work done in the province in the p2p (person to person) program, the Mennonite youth farm program and the nursing programs. Women in Mission creatively depicted the work of their organization past and present.

The camp coordinating committee presented the conference with a motion to add a kitchen-area wing to the existing facilities at Camp Shekinah. The estimated cost is $33,400. A motion was carried that the committee could solicit funds and proceed with the project once money is available.

An exciting aspect of CMS reporting is that done by Rosthern Junior College and Swift Current Bible Institute. CMS and the Conference of Mennonites in Alberta are the supporting bodies of these two educational institutions. Decreased enrollment and the long-range financial responsibilities connected with the building project at SCBI are matters of concern for the conference at this point. However, the schools are seen as vital to constituency welfare and growth. They have strong moral and financial support.

The conference accepted a motion that the Rosthern Mennonite Church Men's Club be permitted to operate the youth farm land on a one-year trial basis.

CMS tabled a motion regarding surplus funds of the Mennonite Home Incorporated. Congregations will be asked to speak to the issue of where to build a nursing home before a final decision is made.

A budget of $518,210 was approved for 1984. *Louise Friesen*

**Mennonite Central Committee U.S.** is planning a reunion for all past and present voluntary service workers who have served in Appalachia. This reunion to celebrate MCC U.S.'s 20 years of work in Appalachia will be July 6-8 at Berea (Ky.) College. For more information about the reunion and history, write or call Jerry Gingerich, Box 420, Whitesburg, KY 41858, (606) 633-5065.

**Mennonite Christian Hospital** in Hwalien, Taiwan, is planning to remodel to make room for an outpatient department and the construction of a fourth-floor library above the chapel. The patient load at MCH has increased significantly since it became a Lao-Bao (laborer's insurance) hospital last November. Four new services were added in 1983: a clinic in nephrology under Brad Yuan, mission partner with the Commission on Overseas Mission; a clinic on hematology and oncology under Yih-ming Yang; a clinic in pediatrics under Yang and a urology clinic under C. T. Lin.

**The seventh** in a series of Believers' Church conferences will convene on the Anderson (Ind.) College campus June 3-5. This ecumenical gathering, composed of representatives from evangelical churches which practice believer's baptism rather than infant baptism, will give particular attention to the recent theological convergence statement "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," which is being presented by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. This conference will focus on the section on baptism. For further details and registration information, contact John W. V. Smith, Anderson College, Anderson, IN 46012.

# Manitoba delegates study pastor/congregation relationships

Winnipeg—Some 300 delegates representing 47 of the 48 Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba churches met at the Burrows Bethel Church in Winnipeg Feb. 24-25.

During a conference filled with much program reporting and affirmation for work well done, the camping ministry and its future saw the most animated discussion. A highlight for many was the spiritual input provided by the three conference messages.

The theme, "Partners in Ministry—Pastor and Congregation," was the central thrust of the devotional aspect of the gathering. In his conference sermon, "Partners in Ministry," outgoing moderator John H. Neufeld stressed that all are called to ministry. He suggested that Christians gather to do church work and scatter to do the work of the church. Neufeld emphasized that, as the salt of the earth, Christians gather in the salt shaker to be equipped for ministry, but that being scattered is primary to their calling.

Abe Bergen, youth worker for CMM, spoke about "The Pastor as a Family Person" on Saturday morning. He stressed the importance of family activities for the pastor and emphasized that the marriage covenant and ordination were both instituted by God.

The Saturday afternoon message, delivered by Adelia Wiens, pointed out "The Congregation's Responsibility to the Pastor and His Family." Wiens asked the question, "What are the implications of the partnership between congregation and pastor?" Paul, she said, rejected the distinction between priest and laity; his key image for the congregation was family. Each member is called to servanthood. The congregation needs to treat the pastor and family as "one of the gang," allowing the minister to be vulnerable. Wiens concluded that an attitude of listening, loving and giving is crucial.

Conference delegates approved a $1,187,950 budget, while total 1983 disbursements were $1,254,760. The per-member levy for 1984, therefore, is down slightly from 1983 at $48.35. The business administration committee expressed appreciation to churches for sending budget money to conference offices on a regular basis. This was a major factor in interest costs being reduced from $2,485 in 1982 to $156 in 1983.

Conference minister John Wiebe highlighted the fact that there is a need for supervisory training for student pastors. A resolution was passed calling for congregations to give approval to their pastors to supervise an intern pastor on a full-time basis for 10 months at least once every three years.

The personnel committee reminded delegates that major changes in salary structures for conference staff are foreseen for 1985.

Faith and Life Communications, whose radio work receives strong support from the listening constituency, reported on discussions with the Rosewell group, which has presented the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission with a proposal for a satellite cable network for the purpose of religious broadcasting.

The education resources committee received a major block of time. Delegates heard testimonies from private school students and reports about major areas in which committee members are involved. From the private schools came the call for a stronger partnership in all church ministries. The committee is beginning to work at making Sunday school material more understandable. A place where this is being tackled is the Sunday School Convention held yearly with good support. Youth ministries worker Abe Bergen was appointed to full-time employment, an increase from three-quarters time.

Elim Bible School reported with thanksgiving that the administration building has been paid for ahead of

*CMM executive officers (left to right) Bill Block, Edwin Teichroew, Darlene Driedger and George Kroeker are installed by Abe Neufeld (far left).*

**Multinational Monitor,** a monthly magazine for corporation-watchers, recently named its companies of the year. The awards were for company behavior during 1982. Worst Company of the Year was Citibank for "circumventing the banking laws of 16 foreign countries and threatening the stability of the world financial system." First Runner-Up was Bank of America for "financing individuals and companies directly linked with Guatemala's death squads." Second Runner-Up was Del Monte for "contaminating the entire milk supply of Oahu, Hawaii's most populous island."

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schedule and that, with the new residence, all students are now housed on campus. There are 53 full-time students; residence capacity is 64. The Manitoba constituency was challenged to fill the school. The new curriculum reflects a balance among academic, worship, community and service programs and an expanded practical experience program.

The missions and evangelism committee highlighted church planting, the many activities of Women in Mission and the ministry at Bannock Point, a rehabilitation center for men in northern Manitoba.

During the committee on camping ministries report, resolutions dealing with upgrading the water system and building a horse barn at Camp Assiniboia were passed. The "sticky" issue turned out to be a resolution calling for $10,000 for consultant fees, including landscape planners and architects, with the intention of developing new programs and facilities for the spiritual renewal of adults, families, church groups, seniors and people with developmental disabilities. After much debate about the pros and cons of a retreat center such as this and whether the approval of spending $10,000 could tie the conference into a long-term project costing large sums of money, the resolution was referred back to the camping committee for another year of study. Some frustration on the part of the committee and staff seemed to be evident as much work had already gone into a thorough study of needs and types of accommodation necessary.

An installation service closed the conference. New executive officers were affirmed by the conference delegate body. They include Bill Block as moderator, Edwin Teichroew as vice moderator, Darlene Driedger as secretary and George Kroeker as personnel committee chairperson. *Robert G. Nickel*

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Decentralization of the Foundation Series

In the spring of 1981 district and provincial education committees appointed resource persons who would be willing to "service" the Foundation Series in their areas. Decentralization will be three years old in August.

Foundation Series resource persons are avilable and willing to help plan teacher training events, visit congregations, introduce new material and answer questions. They each have a complete set of the Foundation Series curriculum.

The resource persons report to the COE office on a monthly basis; in turn they receive a monthly packet of information and resource materials. They are reimbursed by COE for their expenses and time.

For further information contact your district/provincial education committee or the COE office.

Edna Dyck

## Meet Larry Dixon,

manager of Faith and Life Bookstore in Berne, Ind. As manager, Larry is responsible for all operations of the bookstore. Larry and his wife, Janet, are also actively involved in Mennonite Marriage Encounter as a team couple. Larry began his work for Faith and Life Bookstore in 1979.

## COE Calendar

**April**
1-6 Project. Teach (Owen Sound, Ont.)

**September**
2 Use of revised Foundation Series material for children begins (order in June)

**Marriage Encounter Schedule**
4/13-15 Spruce Lake, Pa.,
5/4-6 Meadville, Pa

## Bookstore Centennial

In 1882 Joel Welty and his brother Dan opened a bookstore in Berne, Ind. Joel and Dan asked S. F. Sprunger, who soon after became a partner, to make the selection of books. The firm was known as "Welty and Sprunger." In 1884, when the General Conference convened in Berne, the bookstore became a church institution and was renamed "Mennonite Book Concern." In 1964 a fire destroyed the building and contents. A new building was built and the business reopened under the name "Faith and Life Bookstore."

Today Faith and Life Bookstore is the oldest continuing business in Berne. Together with a second store in Newton, Kan., it is owned and operated by the Commission on Education of the General Conference Mennonite Church. Both Faith and Life Bookstores seek to serve the church in any way possible and to provide a positive witness in the communities in which they are located.

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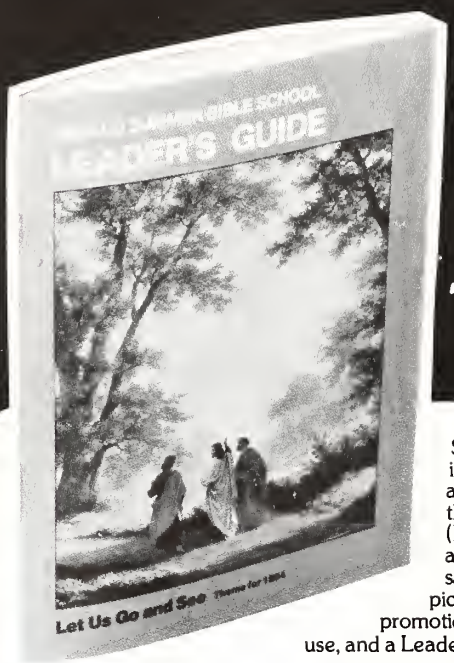


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## Idols in our lives

In his list of steps for coping with "The Chameleon of Idolatry" (Jan. 31 issue), Mark Stucky omits one which is as important as those he identifies: submission to the discernment of other believers.

Following Stucky, I may attempt to recognize the idols which hide in my life, I may resolve to do something about them and I may request God's help for victory.

But without the aid of sisters and brothers, my recognition of those idols likely will be selective and fragmentary, my resolve to dethrone them faint-hearted and my request of God's help weaker than it otherwise might be.

If I do not admit the need for the aid of other believers in breaking free from my idols or if I resist their admonition, or if the fellowship of which I am a part fails to make available its discernment, then we all will have succumbed to that idol which is just as subtle, pervasive and spiritually deadly today as any of those Stucky enumerates: individualism. *Philip Bender, Box 132, Altona, MB R0G 0B0*

Feb. 20

## Conflict needs attention

Your editorials of Jan. 17 and 31 pose painful questions concerning communication and unity within our conference organizations. Your searching analysis applies also to other ecclesiastical bodies. Splits, schisms, factions and alienated parties seem to appear from Corinth in New Testament times to the present, and from the Mennonites to the Presbyterians, Baptists and Episcopalian-Anglican groups.

These agonizing failures in Christian unity happen often enough to suggest study of and training in conflict resolution in the context of group dynamics. An example of this was Harold Schultz, president of Bethel College, going to Claremont to study organizational theory and practice with Peter Drucker, a major figure in this area. Prairie View Mental Health Center now offers counsel to religious and secular organizations in methods which exchange sandpaper and sledgehammers for speaking the truth in love. The breakdown in communication happens too often to leave this problem alone in the years ahead. *Donovan E. Smucker, 57 McDougall Road, Waterloo, ON N2L 2W4*

Feb. 20

## Be careful about opinions

The Jan. 17 issue reports that "nuclear power may be a dying business . . . nuclear facilities are now more expensive than coal-fired plants." Someone needs to point out that the facts are otherwise.

Nuclear power is not dying in France, the USSR, etc. Even in North America its alleged expense is due to the extreme application of double standards. We are careless about coal and other energy sources because we are used to the many deaths in mines, fires, explosions, etc. We ignore the numerous studies which have found that small amounts of radiation lengthen life. And so on.

This discussion cannot be done in a paragraph or two. It need not be limited to specialists, but others who wish to comment usefully *must* first read widely and think carefully about both sides. In any case, our opinions may start to change too late, at the time of the next "oil shock." How about balancing future negative arguments—some are valid—with positive ones? Our lives could depend on it as much as they depend on electricity. *Ronald L. Rich, 112 S. Spring St., Bluffton, OH 45817*

Feb. 20

## Looking for new ideas

In the Dec. 7, 1976, issue you printed an article about Chrismons Christmas tree decorations with symbolic meanings. I later purchased a book on how to make these decorations. It also contained a program to explain the symbolic meanings. My book has been mislaid, so although we enjoy the decorations we use on the church tree, we have forgotten some of the meanings. Can any readers help me locate another book? *Elsie Neufeld, Box 478, Boissevain, MB R0K 0E0*

Feb. 24


## Associate minister needed

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Vic Wieler, chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.


## Where do you take salt?

So the church in Oregon desires to take its salt out of the conference. One wonders where it will take its saltiness, since the church is the "salt of the earth." Will they take it to some church group who needs it more, to a group who needs it less, or will they keep their salt to themselves?

Some churches have not learned to work with diversity. In 1 Corinthians 12 the apostle speaks of the diversity that exists within the unity of the church and of the unity that exists within that diversity. The letters of Paul give evidence that the Holy Spirit loves to work in the midst of diversity. I don't fully accept all the ideas that come out of Newton. I also think we need stronger leadership, but I love to work within the diversity of the conference. *Ward W. Shelly, Route 2, Box 51, Fortuna, MO 65034*

Feb. 24

## Acid rain

If a Mennonite family systematically burned trash in their yard every day on which there was a wind that carried the smoke right into the yard of a neighboring Mennonite, would it be unchristian for the aggrieved neighbor to complain politely? And would the offending trashburner be Christian to ignore that complaint?

I am not talking about a mere theoretical case. We Mennonites in the United States are joining others in burning high-sulphur coal in factories along the Canadian border, and the smoke from these factories drifts across the Canadian border and falls in the form of acid rain. The Canadian government claims on good scientific evidence that our atmospheric garbage is killing fish, poisoning soil and even eating paint off buildings and autos.

Cleaning up this pollution would not put our factories out of business. It would entail merely closing down for a few days and installing "scrubbers" in their chimneys. But the U.S. president has refused to invoke his environmental powers and order this cleanup, insisting that the acid rain is harmless.

Is it not unchristian for us in the United States to keep silent on this issue? *Herman C. Johnson, Box 382, North Newton, KS 67117*

March 5

## More on authority

Regarding the Mike Klassen article on "Authority" (Jan. 3 issue), I wonder how he explains "dunamis" in Romans 1:4 and 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 1:19, etc. Maybe he has a different Greek Testament. I have only Westcott and Hort. *Ward W. Shelley, Route 2, Box 51, Fortuna, MO 65034*

March 7


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# Churches in the information age

*Barth Hague*

AZ-76

Last fall I invited 100 pastors to help the General Conference develop a theme for its 1984 media campaign. The pastors were sent a questionnaire and asked to respond from their congregation's perspective. The questionnaire asked, "What should the new theme be?" "How should the theme be presented?" and, "Do you think your congregation might incorporate a conference media campaign as part of its own outreach effort?"

The response was both fascinating and discouraging. The pastors displayed creativity and perception. Theme ideas ranged from alcohol abuse to unemployment to spirituality. Some of the suggestions for how these ideas could be treated in print, television, radio and film were equally creative. That information will help conference staff.

At the same time I was discouraged. The majority of the pastors indicated their congregations would not become involved in any local media efforts. The reasons varied. One respondent wrote, "Media has far less impact in our isolated rural area than in many areas of the country. . . ." It would seem rural folks don't watch television, listen to radio or read newspapers. Another wrote, "(We won't become involved) since we are located in a very Mennonite and Brethren community." Are modern Anabaptists immune to things like alcoholism, unemployment, family problems and hopelessness?

I did receive several comments from pastors indicating interest in incorporating media in local outreach despite small, urban church settings, small budgets and little staff time. That's encouraging.

Perhaps the most painful responses were ones like these from pastors who said they wouldn't become involved: "I feel that door-to-door canvassing is a better way of getting into the community. Personal witnessing (is) more gospel-like." "To date (we have) felt that your presentations have been too low-keyed, not Christ-centered enough."

Despite hours of work to ensure scripts are biblical, despite efforts to guarantee our theological integrity is not compromised, despite the letters of thanks from listeners, readers and viewers, and despite numerous industry awards, we as conference communicators fail to communicate with our conference. Our work is still misinterpreted and often ignored.

**Christian communication is a ministry to human needs.** Don Oberdorfer, a Lutheran church communicator, writes in *Electronic Christianity: Myth or Ministry*, "Perhaps we need to remind ourselves again that discipleship is not a race between members of the body of Christ to grow in membership. Nor are we limited to using words and phrases that sparkle with their overtly Christian nature. We've all known the committee member who, having watched our latest documentary film on hunger, says, 'Not once did I hear the name of Jesus mentioned.' Or how about the church executive who glances over your script on loneliness and frostily comments, 'What's Christian about this? Any life insurance company could do this.' The examples are endless."

Oberdorfer explains, "We are not in the business of being religious communicators to create church members. We are ministers who, with Christ, serve the needs of a hurting humanity when and where that hurt occurs. As physicians we can diagnose and we have some good ideas about the cure, but we minister to the patient where that patient is, and we enable the process of religious discovery to happen."

In 1984 the potential for reaching vast numbers of hurting people is mind boggling. New communication structures open up tremendous frontiers for ministry in the United States and Canada. Goshen College professor Shirley Hershey Showalter writes, "We who have placed our faith in transcendent spiritual values—peace, love and justice—face not only an opportunity but a moral obligation to transmit those values to an information society."

Two things seem clear. (1) Conference leaders and staff must work harder in explaining the role and intent of media in the mission of the church. (2) We must recognize that *all* of us are kingdom communicators. The print and electronic media people have their special areas of expertise, but in one way or another Christ calls us all to be communicators.

In this age of increasing means of communicating with those around us, I hope we can accept the challenge to find new and effective ways to express our beliefs to share our faith and to minister to hurting people.

*Barth Hague, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, is the director of the Media Division of the Commission on Home Ministries.*

# It could be the Electronic Renaissance

*Frederick Williams*

We are changing. Not just our institutions, the cars we buy or the fashions we wear. We, the human species, are in the process of adapting to or being adapted to a new kind of world. It is a communications world, but is it a brave new communications world?

Research indicates that children raised on television are maturing the right hemisphere of their brains (visual thinking) at a faster rate than the left hemisphere (digital thinking, including reading and writing). Adults *and* children hooked on television seem to live in a false media world of facts and figures.

The last 10 years have brought to the forefront the first communication device that interacts with us on an intellectual level—the electronic computer. Unless computers are programmed to reflect human qualities, children raised on computer-assisted instruction will have no knowledge of metaphor, little tolerance for ambiguity and a strange, at least to the computer naive, sense of humor. They will be serial rather than global thinkers. Masters of digital logic, they will be idiots as creative thinkers.

Books, conferences and conversations in media circles are increasingly focused on one question—what will be the social impact of today's new technology? Opinions range from doomsayers who fear we are in a rapid decline as a species to idealists who envision a 2001 world, immaculately machined and unspoiled by human limitations.

The revolution in communication reveals itself to us in many bits and pieces of everyday life. Election campaigns are media blitzes. We now can ask directions in French with a hand-held translator. Products are marked with prices that only a computer can read. We are buying telephones as decorator items, and some of them can answer themselves. Business mail can be sent by office copiers linked by modems. Our telephone calls may make a 44,000-mile space trip so a communication satellite can bounce them across oceans. Businesses check our credit by pressing a few buttons. Pocket calculators are sold like toothbrushes, and some of them even make music.

You are definitely in a minority if you are not a little baffled by it. Most people are anxious at how rapidly this electronic environment has taken over and begun to change us.

Most of what we read and hear about this revolution is in the razzle-dazzle of the technologies themselves. We show up only now and then as marketing statistics.

Life could be substantially improved in the new technological environment. Electronic leisure could encompass much more than simply mass-marketed mediocrity. Health-care costs could stabilize as computers and two-way communication networks improve the dissemination of medical information. Politics could be a truly democratic exercise when a population can be instantly polled. Schools could change dramatically now that the lectures of master teachers can be delivered at the flick of a switch.

We are moving rapidly into this new world in which the human uses of communication—information, management, observation, entertainment, enlightenment—are our primary human resources. For the first time in history we may be able to control much of our psychological environment. We can trivialize or bore ourselves as easily as we can respect and inspire ourselves.

Because this new environment is virtually at our command, it can offer us new opportunities as a species. By shaping this new communication environment for human purposes, we can even create a new renaissance, what we might call the Electronic Renaissance.

*This article is adapted and edited from the author's book* The Communications Revolution *(Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, CA 90212; $12.50/paper) and is reprinted by permission of* Media & Values, *a quarterly review of media issues and trends published by the Center for Communications Ministry, 1962 Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034.*

## Media messages

*Chris Ahlemann*

I hear on the morning news
of disintegrating governments,
escalated fighting
and stalemated summit meetings.
I see on the noon report
of traffic accidents,
burglarized businesses
and social injustice.
I read in the evening paper
of shattered marriages,
battered children
and assaulted senior citizens.
And then, when I retire
at the close of the day,
Is it to forget
or pray?

## Schuller's gospel

**Mountains Into Goldmines: Robert Schuller and the Gospel of Success** *by Dennis Voskuil (Eerdmans, 1983, 176 pages)*

*Review by John H. Neufeld, pastor of First Mennonite Church, 922 Notre Dame Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3E 0M9*

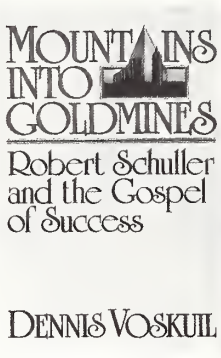
"I believe in the Bible, but if people want Bible preaching they can get it elsewhere." These are words of Robert H. Schuller, who speaks to millions of people every week on the "Hour of Power" telecast from the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif.

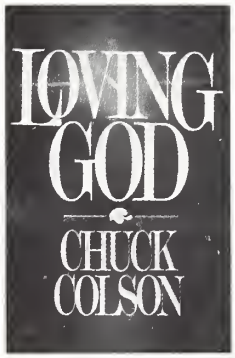
Is the preaching of Schuller biblical? What accounts for the amazing success story at Garden Grove? How can we assess the impact that this man has on our time? Not only does he influence people as a TV pastor—he is also a church growth specialist, offering institutes to church leaders several times a year, and a theological writer read by millions.

Many who have viewed his telecasts have questions about his background and his theological drift. These questions are answered in Dennis Voskuil's *Mountains Into Goldmines*. In this volume is background material and analysis to better understand the phenomenon of Robert H. Schuller.

Schuller is a preacher to the unchurched and places psychology at the center of his ministry (p. 25). What this means is elaborated in the chapter "The Theology of Self-Esteem" (p. 93 ff). He is convinced that the unchurched are not ready to listen to abstract theological jargon. He would rather use "the human needs approach," arguing that the deepest need of human beings is the need for self-esteem. "Man is a dignity-seeking creature" (p. 99).

Consistent with this approach, Schuller will not preach on people's sins. People know they are sinful, and this negative self-image should not be reinforced. Rather he preaches self-actualization, rooted in an evangelical faith. The term "possibility thinking" is central in his understanding of self-actualization. He defines it as "that mental attitude which assumes that any objective that is noble, admirable or beautiful can be realized even if it appears to be impossible" (p. 73). He preaches success, using "the strange synthesis of evangelical grace and New Thought principles of self-help" (p. 129).




In his assessment of the man and his theology, Voskuil focuses on several key issues raised by Schuller: (1) What is the relationship between the gospel and success? (a question Mennonites also face), (2) How accurate is his conviction that self-esteem is central in understanding human nature? (3) To what extent do psychology, positive thinking and the gospel belong together? and (4) Is it appropriate that the world set the agenda for the church?

Whether we are fans of Schuller or are skeptical, Voskuil's book is helpful in understanding and evaluating a movement which involves millions of our contemporaries.

## Repentance and commitment

**Loving God** *by Charles Colson (Zondervan, 1983, 250 pages)*

*Reviewed by Janice Pauls, Route 2, Box 78, McPherson, KS 67460*

If Christians today were to actively apply God's truths and commands as recorded in the Scriptures, they would literally turn the world upside down. Even though this comment could easily be associated with Don Kraybill's book on the kingdom, it also concisely summarizes the focus of a new book by Charles Colson.

Reading this book is like experiencing a breath of fresh air. It definitely is not what one would expect from a person who has been incarcerated due to political improprieties. Although the author probably is capitalizing somewhat on his notoriety, he makes little attempt to whitewash his crime. In fact, he dedicates minimal space to the Watergate coverup itself.

*Loving God* is a combination of true stories reflecting personal Christian growth, biblical illustrations and religious commentary. The vignettes of people from Alexandr Solzhenitsyn in Russia to William Bontrager in Elkhart, Ind., serve to emphasize the author's point that true repentance not only forgives past sins but requires ultimate surrendering of self which subsequently changes a Christian's present course of action.

Colson, who writes as one who was inside the Watergate web looking out, feels that people in prison may have an easier time understanding repentance than those on the outside because repentance means freedom. He also deals with the question of why repentance is so seldom preached in modern America today.

The book is well-researched and well-written. It contains enough imagery to keep the reader's attention, but most importantly it addresses Christian commitment and provokes a great deal of thought on this subject.

## Healing from depression

**Why Am I Crying?** *by Martha Maughon (Zondervan, 1983)*

*Reviewed by Marilee Horton, 1702 Richmond Ave., Lynchburg, VA 24502*

*Why Am I Crying?* takes the reader down a very personal and dark road of fear, anxiety and depression. It honestly shares years of treatment, healing and times of slipping back.

Martha Maughon speaks to the suffering Christian about putting on a "victorious disguise" and being so "preoccupied with protecting our reputation that we forget to be real."

Maughon relates to other Christians suffering with emotional disorders because she had these very real problems herself. Relating that more often than not recovery is a process and not instantaneous will guide fellow sufferers realistically.

Anger, guilt and low self-esteem play their part in mental and emotional problems in "real" Christians as they did with Maughon. She speaks of the "us" and "thems" and sees insensitivity because the "thems" have had little personal experience or insight into mental illness.

Real help for the depressed and anxious is spelled out physically, emotionally and spiritually.

This book would be beneficial to any Christian suffering similar disorders as well as anyone desiring to be more sensitive to others.

# MEDITATION

## A parable of missions

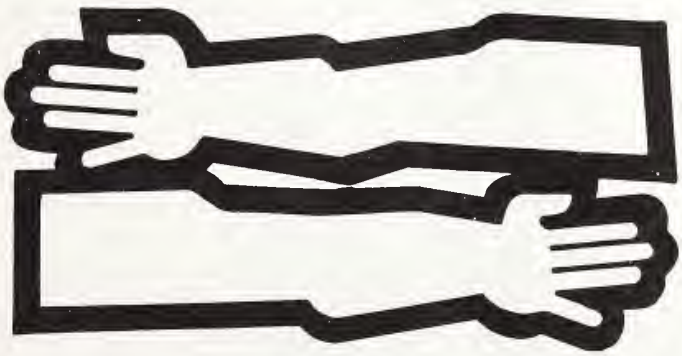
There were missionaries sent by Mennonite churches in the United States and Canada to a far country to share the gospel and begin new churches. They built a church building like the ones in which they had grown up, preached the gospel as they had heard it preached, waited for the crowds to come and were disappointed when no one came asking for baptism and church membership. They wrote back to their home churches and said, "These people just do not seem to feel at home with us. They do not seem ready for the gospel." The home churches responded, "Oh foolish missionaries. Of course they do not feel at home with you. It is your job to learn to feel at home with them. You must learn to know them so that you can share the gospel in ways that are understandable to them. You must take the first step in meeting them. You must change."

At about the same time there was a Mennonite church at "home" that was beginning to feel a bit guilty because it was not "reaching people in the community." So they organized for evangelism and went out and invited neighborhood people to come and worship with them. A few did, but they only came a few times and then left. The church felt discouraged. They said, "These people just do not feel at home with us and our style of worship. Our cultural traditions are different, our level of education is different, the ways in which we feel comfortable worshiping are different. They never will feel at home worshiping with us."

And God said, "Oh foolish church. Of course they do not feel at home with you. It is your job to learn to feel at home with them. You must learn to know them so that you can share the gospel in ways that are understandable to them. You must learn to worship in ways that will make them feel at home with you. You must take the first step in meeting them. You must change."

But the church was not sure that was right. They wondered if it might not seem hypocritical for them to worship in ways that did not seem natural to them. It would not seem authentic. "We must be ourselves." The church never really saw that it was called to be for others, not only for its own members. "Of course missionaries must change and adapt for the sake of the gospel when they go to a far country. Paul did talk about being all things to all people in order to share the gospel with them. But we must be ourselves." And so that church continues as a comfortable little club, giving its offerings to help others and feeling just a bit guilty about the community around it.

*Robert L. Ramseyer*



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Is ours the time of the end when many "shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase" (Daniel 12:4b)? If information flow means knowledge, it could readily seem that way. Unfortunately, verbal inflation may today be a bigger problem than economic inflation. Many say we are drowning in a sea of information and starving for knowledge. I would add that we are desperately in need of communication that points toward communion. Our souls seek wisdom and love, forgiveness and acceptance, connection and purpose.

We can do much more in using our new technology as instruments for Christian witness. Our prayer is that many readers will feel challenged enough to seek more sincerely how we can do it and then to do it.


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CONTRIBUTIONS

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# editorial

## *From buffalo chip to microchip*

Only a century ago my ancestors came from Russia to Manitoba. The buffalo chip abounded on the Canadian plains. It was the source of heat and pointed to where food could be found.

In my youth we carefully stacked the cow chips back of the barn. Once a year we pressed them into "manure squares" which were used for heat and for insulation around the house. Individual chips became our goalposts and pucks to play hockey.

From the buffalo chip to cow chip to today's microchip is only 100 years on the calendar. The extent of change over that century is symbolized in their respective geographies.

The buffalo chip abounded in river valleys—the heart of agrarian life. Microchips abound in silicon valleys—the heart of dense populations available for commercial exploitation.

We are part of a radical revolution. Instead of the brawn required by the buffalo chip, the microchip exists by the brain. Completely mechanical robots replace thousands of human laborers each day. Some futurists wonder if there is need for human life once the microchip is fully developed. We have only begun to see the potential of talking, reasoning, decision making and feeling machines.

**The Electronic Renaissance** is dawning, a new age we cannot escape.

Mennonites have a history of first denying such new innovations, then proclaiming statements of negative judgment, and then moving to places where the influences are not yet obvious. Or we assimilate—sometimes overnight—these new elements into our lives without the capacity to use them constructively and critically. Different Mennonite groups have done it with unique examples: the automobile, electricity, the telephone, the piano, the talking picture, the radio, the television, clothing, language and church architecture.

The electronic revolution is so global that it becomes more difficult to move away from its influence. Our own education and faith—when we try to relate honestly to our environment—make condemnation a ridiculous option. Living in the Western world makes denial almost impossible.

That leaves us little choice.

All along there have been some Mennonites who have spied out the land of the electronic giant. Some—the majority to date—come back and say it is a land of great stature "and we seemed ourselves like grasshoppers . . ." (Numbers 13:33). Others—a minority—return and say it is an exceedingly good land that flows with milk and honey, and the Lord wants us to occupy it (Numbers 14:7-9).

When Joshua and Caleb came from Canaan with the latter report, their people wanted to stone them (14:10).

The fears of his chosen people angered God (Numbers 15ff). Why don't we trust his promises that hell cannot prevail over the church (Matthew 16)? We hold the keys to the kingdom but become fainthearted at the challenge of the microchips in silicon valleys.

The time is now for General Conference Mennonites to accept the microchip as part of God's blessing to us. Let's learn to accept this beautiful gift for expanded communication of the kingdom values we believe. Read Eric Friesen's counsel inside this issue. His are prophetic words. Let's invest some more of our affluence in production and transmission centers. Let's pray to God for servants as leaders in the use of the microchip.

We are already both users and abusers. Let's choose deliberately to accept the microchip as from God and pledge ourselves to learn how to use it effectively as an instrument for the Holy Spirit.

If Christians don't hasten to accept our opportunity in a responsible manner, we cannot blame those who will deliberately use it for manipulation. Technology is intrinsically neutral. The way we use it or let it be used determines its character. *Bernie Wiebe*

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:08 APRIL 10, 1984

APR 12 '84

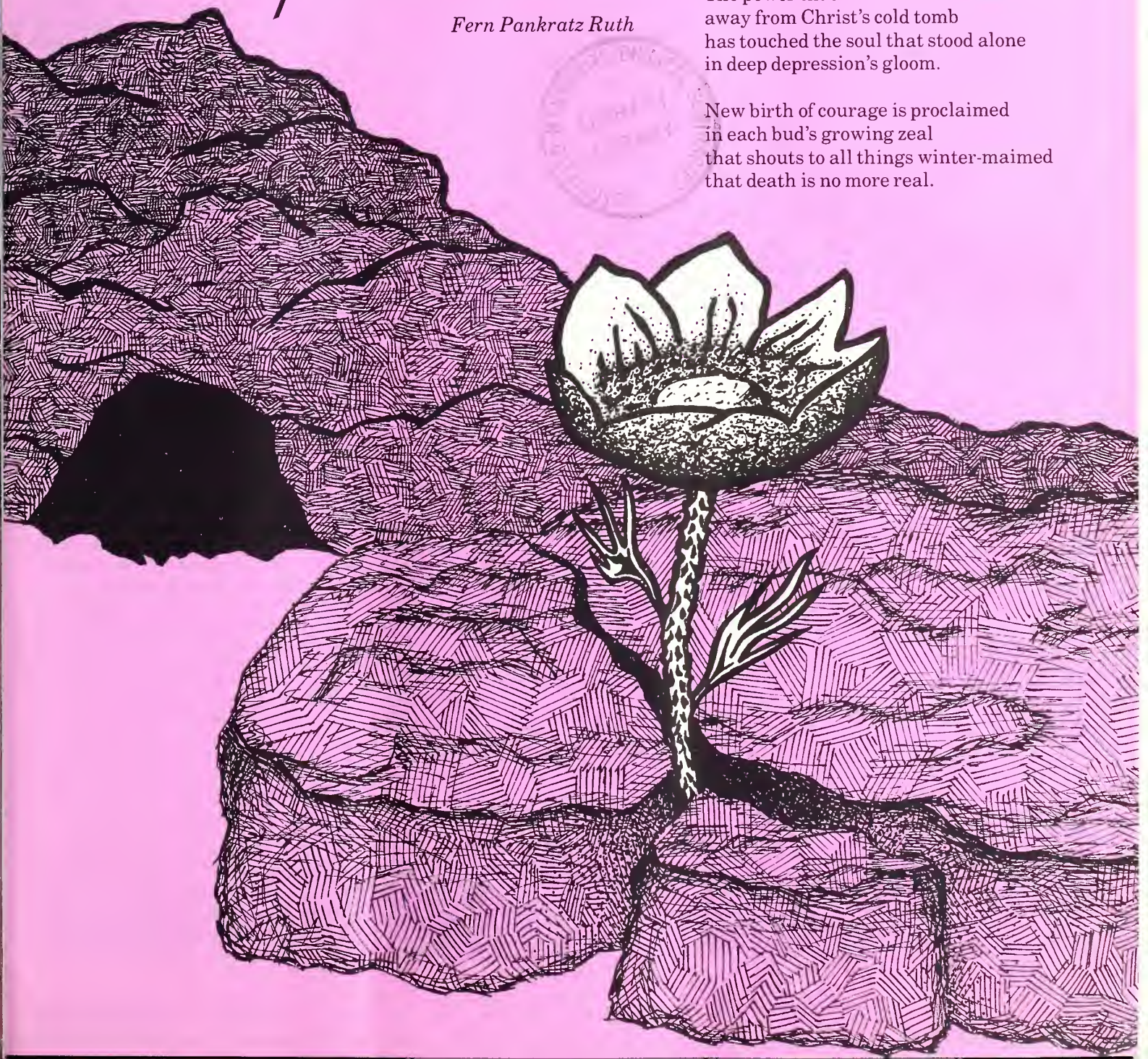
# The Easter proclamation

*Fern Pankratz Ruth*

Once more the bruised spirit lifts
as spring seeps through the land
and crocuses peek through the drifts
that ice the grass and sand.

The power that rolled the star-sealed stone
away from Christ's cold tomb
has touched the soul that stood alone
in deep depression's gloom.

New birth of courage is proclaimed
in each bud's growing zeal
that shouts to all things winter-maimed
that death is no more real.



# My tears washed his feet

*Mary Beth Berkshire Stueben*

**Dominus Flevit church on the Mount of Olives. Visible on the corners of the building are two of the four stone "tear vials."**

*In the 1982-83 school year, Mary Beth Berkshire Stueben participated in a Jerusalem study semester sponsored by the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. During a walking lecture on the Mount of Olives, professor Jim Fleming pointed out the church Dominus Flevit, which has four tear vials about its dome. He spoke of Luke 7 and the customs concerning tear vials. Mary Beth was deeply moved by his teaching and later shared about it in an Easter sunrise meditation at Hively Avenue Church, Elkhart, where she is a member. This article is adapted from her meditation.*

This very morning Jesus has arisen from the dead!

I have only just found it out and I had to come share the news with you, to come share in your rejoicing. With the events of the last few days we've all been a bit confused and we have mourned for his tragic death. But we've also been forced to realize how much impact Jesus has had on us. None of our lives will ever be the same again.

This resurrection has some people all shook up. They not only didn't expect it, they can't believe it. But I wasn't surprised. Since the first time I met him, I knew that his was the power of life.

May I share the story of my life with you? Of those who will eventually write out accounts of this good news of Jesus, only the physician Luke seems to be interested in my tale, to know how I met Jesus and what it meant in my life, and even he has problems remembering my name. To him I was simply a "woman of sin" who met Jesus while he ministered in the area about Capernaum.

My life had been neither easy nor happy. I did not have the benefit of being born into a secure, socially prominent family; I was always a bit on the fringes. My parents were modest tenant farmers, and both died when I was young. Then a distant cousin took charge of settling family affairs and married me off to an older merchant who wished to build up heirs for himself. Because I produced only daughters, I was cast off by my husband as one who failed to perform her duties as a wife.

*". . . I poured out on his feet all the pain and loss and shame of my life, the tears . . . as they cleansed his feet, they also cleansed my heart."*

My children were placed into positions of service. Their labors were hard, they were young and frail, and so they did not survive long.

As I had mourned the loss of my parents, so too I cried for the loss of my children. In the custom of our time, I gathered my tears into a vial, a ceremonial cup that I carried with me as a sign of my mourning, to declare to the world the depth of my sorrow.

As you might expect, my social status was not improved by my husband divorcing me and my future course was predictably downhill. One man treated me well and promised to care for me always, but then he died. For this tragedy too the tears that I wept were carefully saved, stored and carried in my vial.

For the most part I was shunned by the "upright" society, for which I shed a few tears also, and most of my income came from the one task I was still considered suited to perform, the task of a professional mourner. (I certainly knew the meaning of sorrow.) A family's loss could be judged by the number of mourners following the funeral procession and so to have many people to weep and lament while carrying their large ornate tear vials added to the family's pride in the stature of their beloved dead one. The fact that everyone knew the mourners were hired made no difference. That a family would spend so much money for a funeral was seen as evidence of true devotion.

A life of poverty is not an easy one, and some deeds that ensure survival leave one without pride. So I became an outcast of sorts in the community, a "known sinner." I had no family, no loved ones and no place within the religious community. And each day as I went through the streets I clasped to my breasts my precious vial, all the sorrows of my life enfolded in my arms.

At this time in my life I met Jesus.

He and his disciples had been off on a spiritual retreat on a nearby mountaintop. When they were through, Jesus came down to the plain below and spoke. There were huge crowds. People came from all of Judea, from as far south as Jerusalem and from the north as far as Tyre and Sidon; huge crowds, and I among them.

The words he spoke electrified us all. They smote our conscience, showed us new direction for our lives, cursed our evil ways and offered us blessings. To the poor and to the ones in mourning he offered blessings. He spoke of loving enemies, of pardoning and finding pardon. He spoke out against the blindness which sets us against each other and of the need to lay the foundations of our lives on sturdy rock.

I was stunned. I had to know more and so I followed him. But I dared not speak to him, feeling the weight of my own guilt and pain.

But on his way back to Capernaum Jesus met a Roman centurion. I may have been an outcast among the Jews, but I was at least a Jew. Here was one who was not Jewish at all but one of the oppressors of our people. And yet, for the faith and the confidence this man had in Jesus' authority, Jesus commended him and healed his servant.

Further along the way he met a poor widow who was burying her only child, and Jesus restored that son to life. Here was one truly with both the power of forgiveness and the power of life itself.

The crowds separated me from him and I could not get close to him. But I found where he was to dine that night, at the home of a socially prominent religious man.

With all the joy and hope and confusion of my life I ran to the house, not knowing what I would do when I got there. They were reclining at the table and I could tell he was tired from a long day. His feet were still covered with dust from his long walk. The host had not even given this one the courtesy of water to clean his feet. I rushed in and knelt by his couch, even though his host recognized me and sneered at me. I wept. I didn't know what to say or how to explain or what to ask. I was angry at his discourteous host, for I loved this man, his wonderful words of God. He deserved kindness. Not really knowing what to do, I held out my vial and tipped out those precious tears that I had so carefully saved and held and carried with me. And I poured out on his feet all the pain and loss and shame of my life, the tears of all the suffering from my unhappy life. And as they cleansed his feet, they also cleansed my heart. With my long thick hair I dried his feet and in my joy I kissed them and kissed them, and with a flask of perfume I anointed them.

He knew. Without any words from me, he knew. When his host chided him and pronounced my shame, Jesus defended me and before this man of the church he pronounced my forgiveness. He commended my faith and he bade me go in peace.

In the months since then my life has not been the same. I no longer attend funerals. I do not carry my tear vial, neither do I count and save my tears, for I no longer live in mourning. The power of life conquered the power of death. I was reborn.

And so I tell you, I was not surprised to hear this joyous news of Jesus' resurrection. His is the power of *life*. And I join with you to celebrate this day. Let us sing for joy! •

# The Lamentations of Jeremiah

*Omar Eby*

**Grief.** We stand in this desolate Jerusalem, once so full of happy and indolent people, and remember her splendid stone columns, cedar panels and gilded ornaments. The soft radiance from old memories of her spiritual beauty washes over us.

The ark, the altar and the basins—all the symbols of God's presence among his people—are laid waste, broken or made the enemy's loot. And we hear the prophet's lamentation: Jerusalem, his favorite footstool, Jehovah has kicked aside. Jerusalem, his cuddled vineyard, he has stripped and trampled his darling grapes with wrath. Jerusalem, his queen among cities, he has made a widow groveling on a dung heap.

The Lord played an enemy's part. The Lord took his stand with the adversary. The Lord strung his bow against his own people. Jehovah cursed his own sanctuary. He, who knows all things, blotted from memory his own children.

Does this recital of horror—this tale of desolation and physical suffering—point to special significance? For in every age men and women suffer, find faith difficult when life is merciless. Did not the Son himself cry, "My God, why. . . ?"

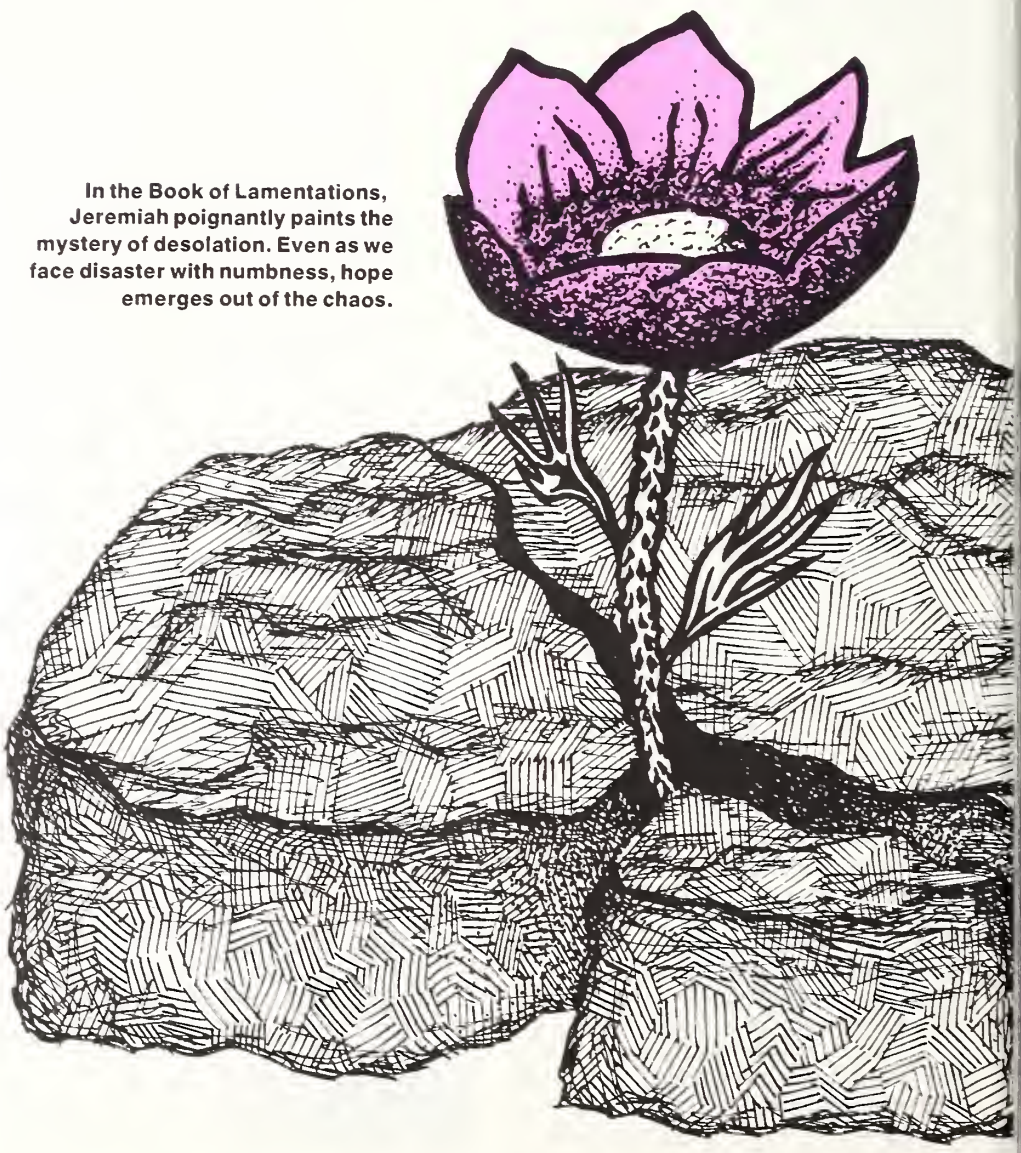
We cannot taste the bitter salt of those ancient people, nor eat the bread of their affliction—those who wore purple, now selling an amethyst brooch for a piece of bread. The fall of Jerusalem destroys every symbol of their election by God. The solemn feasts of their election by God. The solemn feasts which gave the heart confidence—gone. He is a terrible lover.

We kneel in the face of death and desolation, as people everywhere have always done. Speechless with grief, we listen to the music and the poetry of the lamentations. God sends poets and singers to help those dumb in shock, to pull us away from a private grief. Too much indulgence in grief is selfish; mourning our disasters and dead ones too much we become numb to the care and cares of the living.

We are restored—a little restored—and can live on best after calamity by facing our desolation, weighing its volume, borrowing these honest and eloquent statements of grief from across time.

If our modern minds at first cast about for cause or wonder about the purpose of faith or whether things are conditioned and determined or whether the Babylonian gods are superior, we come at last to share the prophet's unshaken faith. With him we do not ask whether Jehovah is God or whether there is a god or why did God will evil. Rather we try to

**In the Book of Lamentations, Jeremiah poignantly paints the mystery of desolation. Even as we face disaster with numbness, hope emerges out of the chaos.**



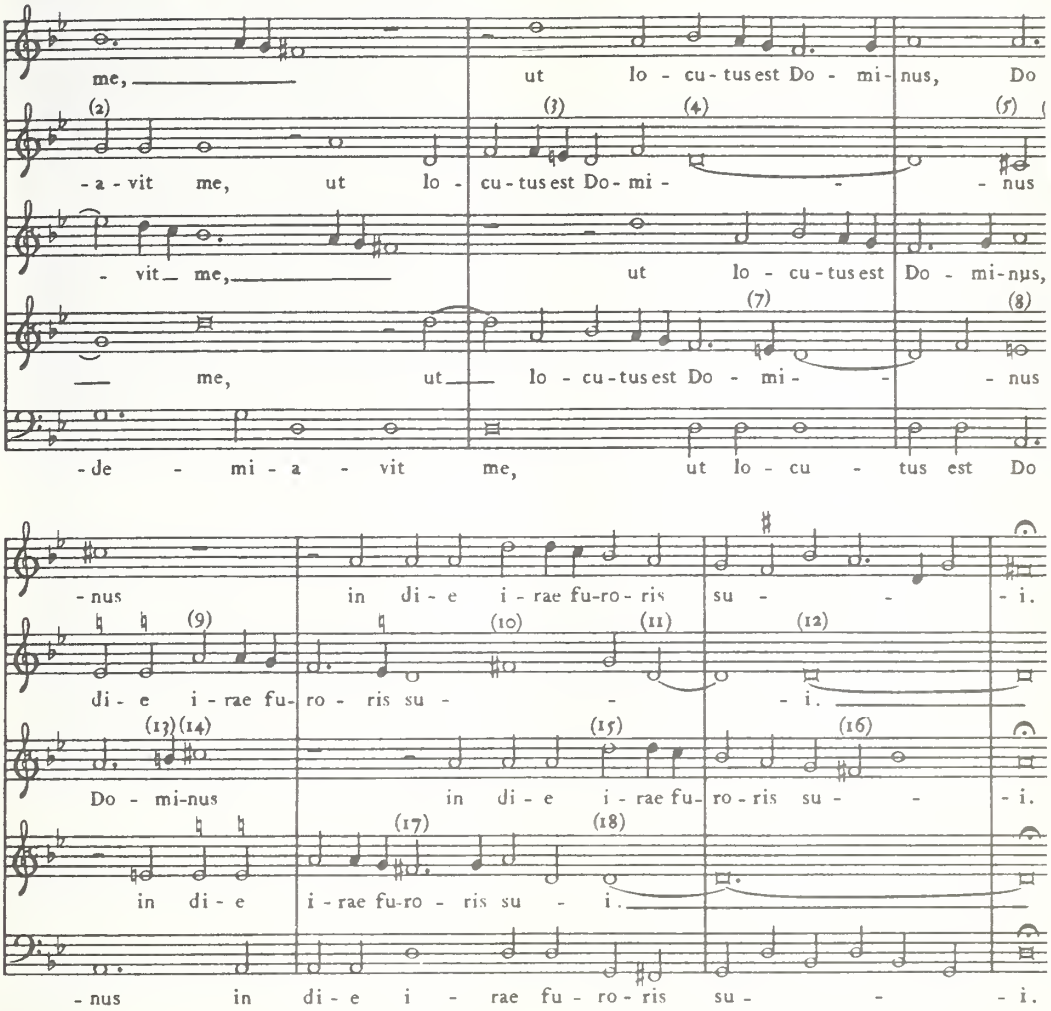
interpret his actions, whether in national disaster or private tragedy, until finally freed we declare, "The Lord was in his right."

The lamentations are not the wild expressions of a grief-maddened and irrational speaker. They come of reflection, of powerful emotion recollected in tranquillity. Violence has ceased, acute suffering is muted—it must be. No person of God could sit amid fresh, vast desolation and compose an elegy as this Lamentation. Of its five chapters, the first two and last two each contain 22 verses, each verse beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet—from Aleph to Taw, the A to Z. The middle chapter has 66 verses—each alphabet letter now given three verses.

An elegy is usually personal. While the lamentations open and close in the distant, objective voice of a narrator, they shift abruptly to the first person; the voice is a widow personifying the city. The heart of the elegy—the third chapter—has the personal voice of the prophet citing *his* experiences.

Here is disciplined grief made into art. Though the form seems artificial, it never hampers the underlying themes which rise full-throated yet meditative as a Renaissance choir—spontaneously, naturally, unforced. Pain in memory is transmuted into poetry full of pathos. Who can speak the mystery of such desolation?

Jerusalem, turn to the Lord your God.




**Confession.** Again this city as a widow says, "Look on me, is it of no concern to you?" We look and see a city—solitary, silent, stinking, deserted. One does not expect to see people in a desert, but a city emptied of people is a shocking sight. Beyond the broken wall, the widow wails to us from an ash heap, "I have become the menstrual rag of the nations. Have pity, have pity!"

We watch the Phoenician merchants in silver-clasped robes ride by north and south on their curried camels. They gaze, unmoved, at the city's ravished houses, the broken olive gardens in the suburbs. The nomadic Bedouins sweep in from the east. Unmoved scavengers, they pick the rubble by the sacred temple wall.

There was one who, like his father, once looked on the city and wept. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; but you would not let me." But that was to be later. Now we can only kneel before the widowed city and her prophet's expressions of grief.

We hear in these statements of calamity an admission, a confession, "It was I who rebelled against his commands; I writhe in anguish because I wantonly rebelled." In the midst of all their grief, the widowed city and her prophet never asked Job's question or our modern one: Why? Why did this happen? Nor do they spin for themselves subtle meanings of catastrophe. They remember the whole covenant with Jehovah, these people elected by him: "When you go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land . . . my anger will be kindled against you. I will forsake you, I will hide my face from you, and you shall be devoured. . . ."

These chastised people make no attempt to evade responsibility for their sins. With them, we remember the words of preachers and prophets thundered from high polished pulpits and whispered by desert brooks. Jehovah's judgment must come as it had visited the iniquity of their fathers and their spiritual leaders.

We cannot know how the widowed city spoke acceptance of divine retribution. Had Jehovah stepped down from his throne to her dung heap, she might have risen and said with heart-wrenching modern directness, "Sir, I have sinned." Firmly, deliberately confessed.

It is refreshing. Nowhere in the book do we hear anybody talking rot about a

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guilt trip being laid on him or about the lack of municipal sanitation which breeds spiritual delinquency. "The Lord was in the right; it was I who sinned." Only that.

This Jewish poet got his theology right. The fall of Jerusalem and the human tragedy were not at all due to Jehovah's loss of power but to the people's sins. The widowed city and her prophet confess it.

But just when we think she might be comforted, she cries, "Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." And we wonder: What is this? More poetry out of misery? Poetry from the dung heap? And with our ear made Christian, we hear the resonance of the smitten Christ in her plea.

All who pass by snap their fingers; they hiss and wag their heads, saying, "Is this the city once called Perfect?"

All they who see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out their lips, saying, "He trusted in God that he would deliver him; well, let him deliver him, if he delights in him."

Mocking him, they cry, "Come down, come down from the cross and save yourself, if you are the Son of God."

Still their voices are one to our Christian ear: "They looked for some to take pity, but there was none, neither found they anyone to comfort them." He who was without moral blemish takes upon himself the sins of Israel, the sins of this woman and her prophet—the sins of the world. He takes them on till he can feel the horror uttered in these lamentations: "Jerusalem lifted her hands in prayer, but there was no one to comfort her. . . . He has hidden himself behind clouds, beyond reach of our prayers."

God's sovereignty extends to his response to our prayers, even our prayers of confession, so that he does not automatically answer us. Not even his own Son who was to cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

God is not absent. We know he is present, but inexplicably he is silent for a while. Who can speak the mystery of such absolute silence?

Jerusalem, turn to your God.

**Hope.** Once more we hear calamity—now in four unrelated figures of speech, as though the writer, short-breathed with sobbing, grasps for any expression of his troubles. It burns like fire—yes, to melt one, to purify one. It ensnares one like a net—yes, to fling one to his feet, to save one from complete ruin. It racks one like an illness—yes, to make one faint, the more easily to restore one. It burdens one like a yoke—yes, to restrain one from bullheaded folly.

Great grief and genuine sorrow lead to open confession. Now we learn another truth. Genuine regrets are the seeds of

**As today's hand places a prayer written on paper into a crack of the wailing wall—the wall from Solomon's ancient temple—it is a confession that things are not as they should be and a hope that God will restore his former glory to Jerusalem.**

hope. The very intensity of suffering is a fire that burns away chaff until one finds polished grain—the gleam of hope. "Except you become as a grain of wheat and die. . . ." For some there is no hope: the stoic with iron-clamped jaw who will only endure, the indolent who floats mindlessly, the proud—still angered and defiant, the spiritual carpetbagger who makes a private capital from others' miseries.

God is merciful. That is our hope. What is never certain is when and how God will deliver. These are God's secrets. Part of the meaning of hope is waiting and waiting—hoping that God will deliver, according to his own will, his own manner, his own timetable. To him a day is as 1,000 years, 1,000 years as a day.

The prophet is not confident that he will see the end of suffering during his own lifetime. "How long, O Lord, how long?" In our hoping we are back to faith, faith alone. Faith without bread, faith without miracles, faith without the company of the faithful. With our ear made Christian, we hear the call of a Christ bent on a Calvary, "Follow me. Come and die."

We cannot make our faith conditional upon some token of God's blessing. "True faith must be able to go on even when everything else is taken away from us. . . . "Only a humble man [or woman] is able to accept faith on these terms, so completely without reservation that he is glad of it in its pure state and welcomes it happily, even when nothing else comes with it and when everything else is taken away.

"If we are not humble, we tend to demand that faith must also bring with it good health, peace of mind, good luck, success in business, popularity, world peace and every other good thing we can imagine. And it is true that God can give us all these things if he wants to. But they are of no importance compared with faith, which is essential" (Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*).

The ancient poet teaches us something more about facing reality. Almost nothing of Israel's history recounted—those "mighty acts of God." No recitation of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—shall one take no comfort in ancient fathers, Israelite or Anabaptist? No account of Pharaoh and the exodus—what, no lessons from one's ancestors who were burned at the Reformers' stake? No reminder of God-granted Zion established on an enemy's hill—is there to be no shoring up of faith by declaring how God gave us Kansas wheatlands, Akron headquarters and Manitoba prairies?

Is one's tribal and private history with God to be no source of hope in calamity? Well, maybe some little hope nourished out of the past. But for now it is to face the bleak current events on Channel 6. Nostalgia for the past and wishful thinking about the future is to have a vain hope which has nothing to do with real faith.

"And how many people there are in the world today who have 'lost their faith' along with the vain hopes and illusions of their childhood? What they called 'faith' was just one among all the other illusions. They placed all their hope in a certain sense of spiritual peace, of comfort, of interior equilibrium, of self-respect. Then when they began to struggle with the real difficulties and burdens of mature life, when they became aware of their own weakness, they lost their peace, they let go of their own precious self-respect, and it became impossible for them to 'believe.' That is to say, it became impossible for them to comfort themselves, to reassure themselves with the images and concepts that they found reassuring in childhood.

"Place no hope in the feeling of assurance, in spiritual comfort. You may well have to get along without this. Place no hope in the inspirational preachers of Christian sunshine, who are able to pick you up and set you back on your feet and make you feel good for three or four days—until you fold up and collapse into despair" (*New Seeds*).

So in our near despair we turn again to God and learn that he is still full of mercy. With faith in this great mercy—that he does not want his people to suffer—with this faith we restore our waiting hope. But who can speak the mystery of such hope in the face of such misery?

Jerusalem, turn to your God. •

# Tithing #2—Why I don't tithe

*Calvin Redekop*

Tithing is not biblical if by tithing we equate it with the tenth of our income. The Old Testament teaching on tithing does refer to the tenth but in specific situations and contexts. There are other references to tithing which present an unsystematic and confused picture. If you don't accept my statement, check the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.* The same source says there is no allusion to tithing in the New Testament even in reference to supporting the work of the church. The New Testament emphasizes support of missionary outreach and taking care of the needy in the congregation. The one reference to tithing by Jesus is a negative one in which he castigates the Pharisees for confusing formalized activities with obeying God's higher law.

The New Testament references to giving therefore indicate that we are obligated to support the proclamation of the kingdom of God with all our heart, mind, strength and soul. The means to support the work of the church will vary from person to person or family, will vary from month to month and, more importantly, vary in form—meaning a variety of gifts. We are to give freely as we have prospered, including nonmaterial prosperity (Matthew 10:10).

But, you say, if a percentage is not stated for giving, then the "tithing" may quietly decrease until the monetary giving is a mere pittance of one's ability and responsibility. Granted, but there are several problems with this monetary approach to giving which provide serious loopholes for responsible Christian giving.

1. A percentage approach undercuts the spiritual and spontaneous joy of sharing and helping in God's work. It becomes mechanical calculation and invidious comparison. For example, "I tithe. Do you?" (2) It becomes pharisaical because it allows us to limit the amount we feel belongs to the work of building God's kingdom—10 percent. (3) Tithing becomes limited to materialistic and monetary dimensions, which may be just what the devil wants. Thus the tithe—the 10 percent idea as a mechanical formula—evades the larger issue of supporting God's work.

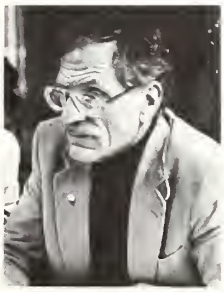
What shall I give? A tenth of my income? A tenth of my resources? A tenth of my time? A tenth of my business? A tenth of my intellectual work? A tenth of every week or year? The more I think of it, the more I like the idea of 10 percent, because if other gifts and resources are included, my average may be good. If you count my church college teaching and weekend conferences and preaching, I give about 79 percent—7 percent of my income (after taxes), 17 percent of my discretionary productive time (37 percent if you count my college teaching) and 55 percent of my prayer time (after my family, the greatest amount of time is spent praying for the church, the pastor, the mission program and MCC). A grand total of 79 percent tithe if you use the 17 percent for time; 99 percent if you use the 37 percent of my time figure.

*What do you and I "cheerfully" give to God? A small portion of our income? Our time? Our energies? Are you prepared to discuss your "tithing" or is it too private?*

You may think my computations are a bit askew. Maybe so, but no more ridiculous than promoting 10 percent of income, when that is so variable and contingent on so many factors. How would a housewife figure hers? On her husband's income? On her allowance? On the time she spends on domesticity? If she shares the tithe with her husband's income, then even if they would give 10 percent together, she would be giving only 5 percent, still better than most.

But for other reasons, which demand more space, I still don't tithe. Now that I have fully confused you, what do you think? Remember the conflict and oppression the tithe has perpetrated historically. There must be a better way.

It has been my conviction that the New Testament way of giving is to let the mind of Christ discern what the gifts are which we can all share, including money. But you don't want to discuss your total giving—time, gifts, money—with your brothers and sisters in the congregation because this is too private a matter. Then how do we know what a tenth means? I have a feeling we are going in circles. That's why I confess that I don't tithe. We might as well come clean and confront the issue as honest people. According to church statistics, we give about 5 percent of our apparent income. Who is kidding whom? Certainly not God. Give as God has prospered? Yes! I need your help in knowing what that is. I'll be glad to discuss my giving with you. Will you do the same with me?



*Calvin Redekop is professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.*

# He pays for war tax resistance

*Allan J. Siebert*

*This is an update to the article "Tax Withholding Is Also a Canadian Issue," which appeared in our Sept. 27, 1983, issue.*

*John R. Dyck (left) talks with Allan Siebert.*

Like the rest of us, John R. Dyck of Rosthern, Sask., files his tax return.

But unlike most of us, he sends Revenue Canada a check for only 90 percent of his unpaid taxes. And he includes a letter informing the Canadian government that, for reasons of conscience, a check for the balance has been sent to the Peace Tax Fund in Victoria, B.C. The second check represents the estimated portion of Canadian taxes designated for the military.

This is the fifth year in a row that John and Paula Dyck quietly insisted on not having their taxes spent on bombs and guns. They believe that Christian non-resistance means more than simply refusing to fight in a war. It also means not paying others to arm and fight for you.

A small but growing number of Canadians are sending a portion of their taxes to be held in trust by the Peace Tax Fund. They are hoping that the Canadian government will recognize their conscientious objection to military taxes and provide an alternative.

As a retired pensioner, Dyck must calculate the taxes he owes and foward that amount with his income tax return. Every year he checks with Ernie Regehr at Project Ploughshares (a peace research group) on the exact percentage of Canada's budget that goes to the Department of National Defense. Last year it was 10.5 percent. He subtracts the military percentage and encloses a letter informing Revenue Canada of his actions, his reasons and the number of his account at the Rosthern Credit Union.

"I tell them, 'If you want it, take it.' But I won't send it myself."

**Consequences.** Last year Dyck found out the hard way what happens when the government wants to collect unpaid taxes. He says he was prepared to accept the consequences of his actions, but not for the ruthless, impersonal way Revenue Canada operates.

One day the Credit Union manager showed him an official letter that had arrived that morning garnisheeing his account. His personal notice of the action did not arrive until a week later. And even though the credit union account held sufficient funds, a second bank account in Saskatoon was also garnisheed. Then, without notice, his two pension checks stopped coming.

The government ended up with $360 more than was due and Dyck has not heard from them since. Presumably his "credit" at Revenue Canada will be used to cover the taxes he won't pay for 1983.

When Dyck visited the Revenue Canada office in Saskatoon to ask why he had not received a notice about the diversion of his pension checks, he was treated rudely. "The man used some pretty rough language. He gave me the impression that he would walk over anyone to get the money."

Although he can recall the money in the Peace Tax Fund trust account if he wishes, he would prefer to have that money used in a hoped-for court challenge, based on the new Canadian Charter of Rights. "On principle, I don't mind paying twice," he says.

The Conscience Canada organization, an outgrowth of the Peace Tax Fund Committee, expects such a challenge to cost at least $50,000.

Dyck himself is not inclined to get involved in a court case. He has had trouble finding a lawyer who is sympathetic. Besides, "the court route should be taken by some organization that has enough money and can do it right."

**What is Caesar due?** John R. Dyck is not a man to get up on a soapbox and trumpet his cause. But the word gets around. There are Mennonites in his hometown who don't agree with him and others who ignore him.

His pastor chooses his words carefully when talking about the subject. "I don't suppose he has a great deal of support in the church; people feel we should obey the government."

Dyck is now 70 years old. When asked why he has taken such a stand when others rest in quiet retirement, he begins to talk about a lifetime spent in church-related service, of the example of his parents, about the books he has read and the years spent overseas with Mennonite Central Committee in Paraguay, India, Korea and Jordan, where he observed the effect of Western militarism. "They all left their mark on me." He is committed to a vigorous, active faith based on a personal experience of God's salvation and presence.

John doesn't mind if people disagree with his stand. "I don't have any corner on the truth. I know what it is for me at this moment. A person should stay true to one's convictions."

About his critics he adds, "People say, 'What do you think you're doing?' I know that. I have no illusions that anyone in Ottawa is listening—at the moment. It has to start small, and I want to support this movement."

But aren't we supposed to give to Caesar what is Caesar's?

"Sure. But does Caesar deserve *all* he asks for?"

*Allan J. Siebert, 208-818 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3G 0N4, is associate editor of* Mennonite Reporter.

# Budgets are also for 11-year-olds

*Albert Esau*

Our 11-year-old son, Brian, manages a business enterprise, a small one to be sure, but one that includes many of the ins and outs of a larger enterprise. As with any business venture, his financial dealings include accounts payable and accounts receivable. He needs to ensure that he pays for his accounts, and he needs to ensure he receives remuneration for services he renders.

He appears to be doing all right in his first venture in the business world. In fact, Gladys and I become a bit envious when we hear the mailbox lid drop and Brian picks up another check.

Brian is a paperboy for the *Swift Current Sun*—Saskatchewan's largest semi-weekly newspaper according to the letterhead of a letter he received the other morning. He delivers the *Sun* on Tuesdays and Thursdays to 40 customers in an area covering several city blocks.

*Young boys may sometimes seem as though they consider life one big time of fun. But they can also demonstrate sincere wisdom and Christian commitment.*

Some time ago Brian and I were shopping at Woolworth's. We were in the toy section, and Brian had his eyes on the sports cars. He was having a difficult time making a decision, and I complicated matters by suggesting that since he had a regular income it might be in order for him to help pay for some of the hockey equipment we had purchased for him. (After some discussion, he agreed it would be in order to help finance his own sports activities.)

Back to the sports cars. As he looked at the shelves again it suddenly occurred to him that he was getting more toys than his sisters. He decided he should save money and buy Jolyn and Sonya each a Christmas gift. As he looked at the shelves again I sensed he was bewildered. He didn't know how to verbalize it, but with his body language and some comments of frustration he clearly communicated to me that he needed help in managing his personal finances.

Having received the message, what should I say? What could I say in a word or two to help him solve his problem and arrive at peace of mind? I had no ready answer. But I did have a suggestion. I asked whether we should go to a restaurant for something to drink and work out a budget for him. That's what we did. It turned out to be one of the most meaningful times we've had together. I enjoyed my coffee; he enjoyed his Coke. We both enjoyed sharing ideas about how his budget should look.

After about 45 minutes of discussion we agreed on the following budget for the month of October. It is given here in abbreviated form:

| *Income* | *Expenses* | |
|---|---|---|
| Paper route | Church | 2.30 |
| Allowance | Gifts | 5.00 |
| | Toys | 4.70 |
| | Candy | 1.00 |
| | Other | 5.00 |
| | Hockey equipment | 5.00 |
| $23.00 | | $23.00 |

Budgets are for 11-year-olds.

*Albert Esau serves as the fund raiser and promotion director at Swift Current Bible Institute, Box 1268, Swift Current, SK S9H 3X4. He is a member of the Zion Church.*

# Speakers named for MWC Assembly

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—The MWC program committee has announced a roster of 12 speakers for the XI Assembly of Mennonite World Conference to be held here July 24-29.

The speakers include pastors, authors, teachers and social workers who are citizens of eight different countries. Their topics are drawn from the conference theme "God's People Serve in Hope."

Charles Christano, president of Mennonite World Conference, will deliver the president's address to open the XI Assembly on Tuesday evening, July 24. He will speak on the theme "Confessing Our Hope."

Christano, from Kudus, Indonesia, is a past president of and pastor in the Muria Synod of Indonesia.

A joint presentation entitled "Who Are God's People?" will be delivered on Wednesday, July 25, by John E. Toews and Hugo Zorilla. Members of Mennonite Brethren congregations, both are currently professors of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif.

Takio Tanase of Obihiro, Japan, and Gilberto Flores of Guatemala City, Guatemala, will each speak separately on the theme "God's People Witnessing" on Thursday, July 26. A professional translator, Tanase is director of the Eastern Hokkaido Bible School and also serves on the pastoral team of the Obihiro Mennonite congregation. Flores, a native of El Salvador, is president of the Guatemala Mennonite Church and an evangelist and church planter. For the past five years, he has pastored the Casa de Horeb Mennonite congregation in Guatemala City .

A team of three will deliver the morning address, "God's People Serving," on Friday, July 27. They are Georgine Boiten du Rieu, a pastor, social worker and city mission worker in Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Elke Hübert, social worker in Ingolstadt, West Germany; and Willi Wiedemann, pastor of the Weierhof Mennonite Church in West Germany.

Author and theologian Ronald J. Sider of Philadelphia will present the address "God's People Reconciling" on Saturday, July 28. A frequent lecturer on peace and justice issues, Sider is associate professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He is a member of Brethren in Christ and Mennonite congregations.

*Speakers at Mennonite World Conference (top row, left to right): Charles Christano, Indonesia; John E. Toews, Fresno, Calif.; Hugo Zorilla, Fresno, Calif.; Takio Tanase, Japan; Gilberto Flores, Campos, Guatemala; Georgine Boiten du Rieu, Netherlands. Second row: Elke Hübert, West Germany; Willi Wiedemann, West Germany; Ronald J. Sider, Philadelphia, Pa.; Sjouke Voolstra, Netherlands; Emma Richards, Lombard, Ill.; Samuel Gerber, Switzerland*

A response to Sider's presentation will be given by Sjouke Voolstra, professor of theology at the Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam. Voolstra is also a part-time minister in the Dutch Mennonite Conference.

The final Sunday morning service of the conference will include sermons by Emma Richards of Lombard, Ill., and Samuel Gerber of Muttenz, Switzerland.

Richards, former missionary to Japan and currently co-pastor of the Lombard Mennonite Church, will preach on 1 Peter 2:4, 5: "What Mean These Stones?" Gerber will then bring the final message, entitled "Rejoice in Hope." Former director of the Bienenberg Bible School in Liestal, Switzerland, Gerber has been a leader in the European Mennonite community for over 25 years.

# MWC assures housing in Strasbourg

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—A second round of conversations with city officials and hotel representatives in Strasbourg in late February has yielded further assurance that housing will be available for MWC participants in July, MWC executive secretary Paul Kraybill said in early March.

Kraybill said he has been fielding numerous questions about housing from concerned Mennonites in light of late plans by the Parliament of Europe to hold a meeting in Strasbourg at the same time as the MWC XI Assembly.

In the most recent talks, "we were told that housing facilities are guaranteed by the city and that the hotels will honor their contracts," said Kraybill.

"The Parliament is continuing to plan its meeting at the same time, but they are making other housing arrangements not in conflict with the space reserved by Mennonite World Conference and Menno Travel Service."

Kraybill said that so far more than 3,000 people have registered for the XI Assembly. "This is short of the goal of 6,000 to 7,000 registrants, the figure upon which the conference budget is based. We are awaiting continued registrations in the hopes that the full estimated attendance will be realized in the months that remain."

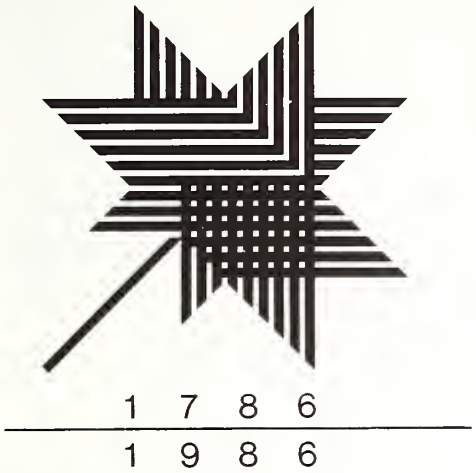
There is no deadline for registration, and many will probably register at the last minute, Kraybill acknowledged. "But we would like to strongly urge prompt registration so that conference planners have an accurate estimate of attendance and can make appropriate facility plans."

The later a person registers, the less choice there will be in the kind of housing available, added Kraybill.

# Plans being made for Mennonite bicentennial in Canada

Waterloo, Ont.—In July 1986 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ people from across Canada and from the United States will gather in the Vineland and Kitchener-Waterloo communities of Ontario to celebrate 200 years of settlement in Canada.

A Mennonite Bicentennial Commission, created in 1982 by the Ontario historical society, by provincial conferences and by national inter-Mennonite organizations, has been planning a series of events beginning in 1984 and culminating the first week in July 1986. Tentative plans call for celebrations July 1 at Vineland, site of the first settlement and of the first Mennonite meetinghouse in Canada, to include the culmination of a youth trek, the unveiling of a commemorative sculpture, a mass outdoor picnic, followed by musical and dramatic productions. On July 4-6, celebrations will be held in Kitchener-Waterloo, including a fine arts festival Friday through Sunday, concerts on Saturday and Sunday evening, and mass public services Sunday morning and afternoon.




The commission has invited Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conferences to schedule their 1986 sessions in Ontario for early in July in order to allow for national, even continental, participation in these events.

The response has been positive and already four such conferences, which meet in Ontario only occasionally, if at all, have indicated planning along these lines.

The commission has stressed the importance of the bicentennial being a national event in view of the fact that the entire Canadian Mennonite and Brethren in Christ community is indebted to and has benefited from the pioneer settlers who first arrived from Pennsylvania in 1786.

Subsequent immigrants—over 50,000—from Western Europe, from Russia and Prussia, and later still from Latin America were helped by those who had come before.

Noting the significance of the bicentennial, Mennonite Central Committee Canada, at its annual meeting in Winnipeg in January 1982, endorsed the idea of 200th anniversary events and stated, "The goals should be to glorify God, to remember the pioneers and the cloud of witnesses around us, to express appreciation for our national homeland, to strengthen our faith, our prophetic witness, and our service in the name of Christ. . . ."

## *Consultation '84 looks at education concerns*

North Newton, Kan.—Approximately 50 people from across Canada and the United States gathered at the Bethel College campus here March 16-18 to compare notes on regional Christian education programs and become better acquainted with available resources.

Gathering for Consultation '84, these education committee representatives from each of 10 provincial and district conferences met with Commission on Education (General Conference) and Congregational Resources Board (Conference of Mennonites in Canada) staff. Sessions were aimed at becoming more familiar with the work of each committee, board and commission and to identify areas where more work is needed. Committee members were also introduced to the revised Foundation Series for Children.

Youth work, family life and adult education were the most common concerns of district and provincial committees. Participants met with COE staff in small groups to learn about how the General Conference could assist them as well as to share grass-roots experiences.

Besides information sharing, the group also discussed the structural relationships between district/provincial committees and COE/CRB programs. "We must remember that we are the 'implement dealers' for the congregations, where the 'sowing and reaping' is done," said CRB executive secretary Rudy Regehr. "Our function is to enable them to do their task better."

## Saskatoon site for 1986 General Conference

Newton, Kan.—The General Conference's General Board has accepted an invitation from the executive committee of the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan to hold the 1986 General Conference Triennial Sessions in Saskatoon.

Dates for the weeklong event are July 21-27, 1986. Conference sessions will be held in the Saskatoon Field House, which is adjacent to the University of Saskatchewan but owned by the city.

According to program committee chairperson Neil Matthies of Martensville, Sask., the overall theme for the sessions will be "Thy Kingdom Come." Each day, however, a subtheme will be designated around which workshops, worship and some reporting will be built.

Delmer and Elsie Epp, co-pastors of Saskatoon's Wildwood Mennonite Church, will serve as conference coordinators and work with the various local committees in preparing for the event.

Finding a suitable location for the youth conference will be one of the host committee's more immediate tasks.


### Associate minister needed

Effective Aug. 1, 1984—one-year appointment

**First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg,** requires associate minister fluent in English and German.

**Duties:** adult education, Sunday school (advisory capacity), preaching and worship, counseling and visitation, committee work

Please contact:
Vic Wieler, chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.

### Administrative position

Secretary for Children's Education
Commission on Education
General Conference Mennonite Church

**Responsible for** resourcing congregations and congregational leaders involved in Christian education of children, coordination and nurture of Foundation Series resource persons, and development and coordination of curriculum for children.

**Requirements include:** administrative and relational skills, theological training, experience and expertise in Christian education.

**Beginning date:** Immediately

**Apply to:**
J. W. Sprunger, Executive Secretary
Commission on Education
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
Telephone (316) 283-5100.

**Correction:** In last issue's Council of Commissions report, in the section on the Commission on Education (p. 156), it was incorrectly reported that (1) the revision of the Foundation Series for Children is completed and (2) it is under the leadership of Edna Dyck. Only one quarter of the revision has been completed, and the editorship is shared among the participating groups. We apologize for the error.

**"Wholistic Ministry:** What Does It Mean to You?" is a conference sponsored by the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly and to be held May 9-11 at the United Mennonite Home in Vineland, Ont. Keynote speaker is Marvin Hein, senior pastor of North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church, Fresno, Calif. Registration costs, including meals, are $100 per person. For further information or to register contact: K. Froese, 171 Donwood Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2G 0V9, (204) 668-4410.

**How to Plant a Church,** a seminar sponsored by North Park Theological Seminary and the Charles E. Fuller Institute of Evangelism and Church Growth, will be held May 29 - June 1 at Pheasant Run Convention Resort Hotel in Chicago. The registration fee is $195 (not including housing, meals, tuition for academic credit or transportation). A non-refundable $50 deposit is required with pre-registration. Registrations postmarked after April 30 will be charged a late fee of $25. To register, write: Charles E. Fuller Institute, Box 91990, Pasadena, CA 91109-1990.

# Future of education focus at Alberta conference

Edmonton—More than 160 delegates and guests gathered at First Mennonite Church here March 9-10 for the 55th annual sessions of Conference of Mennonites in Alberta. The theme chosen was "Study to Show Thyself Approved Unto God: Education for Mennonites to and in the 21st Century."

While business issues as such took a lower profile than they had in the previous few years, considerable interest and dialogue was generated by three presentations on the conference theme. Gary Colwell, Medicine Hat College, led off by giving a broad picture of the problems current morality and technology present. He indicated that values have disappeared, not only shifted, in an era of rampant situational ethics. Opportunism and narcissism are two current "cults" to which we all have fallen victim to a certain extent. The medium of these new seducers is television, "the faucet of modern life," Colwell said.

Fred Enns and Jake Harder, both widely experienced in educational and conference circles and members of the host congregation, gave the other two addresses.

Enns made a detailed analysis of private and public schools and concluded that for the grades K-12 group the investment of churches in private schools was questionable at best. Research he cited indicated that the preponderance of influence on a child's educational development lies with the parents and the home rather than with the school, private or public.

Harder addressed himself to practical structural applications we could implement in the next two decades. He also underlined the central significance of the home. His four strategies were (1) carry on the current approach but seek to eliminate the debts our schools have accumulated and distribute the programs better; (2) influence local teachers and schools in the public setting to a greater extent (More Mennonites should become teachers.); (3) establish an Alberta/Saskatchewan Mennonite education authority to coordinate and operate all church education programs, including extension and camping in the two provinces; (4) extend this third idea to a Canada-wide picture to include all Mennonites *a la* MCC.

*From left, Vernon Neufeld, Bill Thiessen and Wesley Berg*

The missions and service committee brought forward a recommendation on church planting which was endorsed by delegates. No specific number of churches was agreed to, but a broadly based approach with various facets was favored. There was also support for continuing a presence with various Indian groups in southern Alberta.

The education committee received favorable comments on their Marriage Encounter weekend with a similar arrangement being planned for 1985. Also a "seminary without walls" is envisioned for 1985.

The delegate body unanimously endorsed a 1984 budget of $261,864. This is slightly less than the $263,000 churches contributed toward CMA in 1983.

Discussion regarding the future of the Alberta Mennonite Home for the Aged, Coaldale, resulted in a modified resolution which instructs that institution's board to make contingency plans in the event that the home needs to be closed due to dwindling enrollments.

Conference schools operated together with Saskatchewan—Rosthern Junior College and Swift Current Bible Institute—reported reduced student bodies and efforts to deal with financial problems.

Three new churches, all in Calgary, joined the conference in a ceremony held Saturday. The three are the Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship, the Chinese Mennonite Church and the Trinity Mennonite Church, increasing the membership of the conference to 18 congregations.

The Friday evening service constituted the official 25th anniversary celebration of the host congregation.

The conference executive for the coming year will be Henry Goerzen, chairman; Henry Dick, vice chairman; Katie Harder, secretary; and George Wall, treasurer. *Lorne R. Buhr*

## Editorial position

General Editor
Commission on Education
General Conference Mennonite Church

**Responsible for** editorial oversight of all the publications of the Commission on Education, including books and curriculum, and for the administration of the COE editorial office.

**Qualifications:** This person will need administrative, editorial, journalistic and relational skills.

**Beginning date:** July 1984

**Apply to:**
J. W. Sprunger, Executive Secretary
Commission on Education
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
Telephone (316) 283-5100.

**Overseas summer placements** are possible through the Commission on Overseas Mission for qualified people. Anyone interested in an internship experience alongside longer-term missionaries should contact John Sommer, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for further details. Assignments for this summer will be finalized by the end of April.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—Paul Erb

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**Eleven people were baptized** in late February in the Las Piedras, Uruguay, congregation, according to John Fehr (second from left in photo below), missionary under the Commission on Overseas Mission. Six of those baptized were part of a Bible study and prayer group that Fehr had been involved in for several months. Fehr works with Daniel Diener (right) of the Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., as well as with two Uruguayan student workers in Las Piedras. MBM and COM participate with the Uruguayan Mennonite Church Conference in evangelism, church planting and in leadership development by providing workers and funds.

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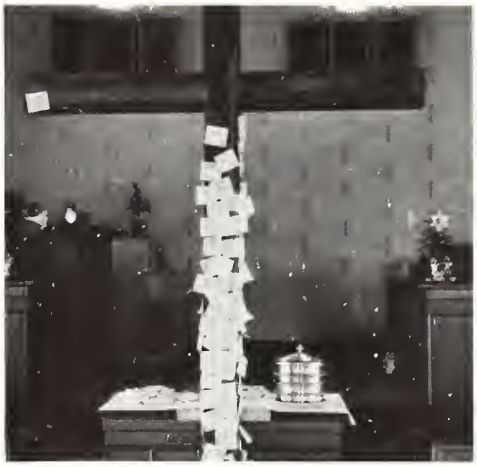
**Goshen College**
**Goshen, IN 46526**

**Sponsors:** Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa.; Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.; Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va.; Goshen College, Goshen, Ind.

**Grace Mennonite Church,** St. Catharines, Ont., last year erected a four-meter-high cross (right)—anchored to the communion table and set at the front of the sanctuary—for its Good Friday service. During the service each person was invited to write his or her name on a piece of paper with the words "Jesus Christ died for _____ ." Then while singing hymns of the crucifixion, people went up singly, with friends or as families to pray at the cross and to nail the paper onto the cross. This action liturgy was followed by communion.



**The new Mennonite Your Way Directory IV,** for the years 1984-86, has been released by Leon and Nancy Stauffer, founders and publishers of the directory. The *MYWD IV* is larger and has more features than any previous edition. It includes more than 2,300 host listings from the United States and Canada, including more than 200 Church of the Brethren households. The section most significantly enlarged is the international listing. Cost of the new directory is $7.50 per copy, or two for $12 (Pennsylvania residents add 6 percent tax). Send orders to: Mennonite Your Way Directory IV, Box 1525, Salunga, PA 17538, (717) 653-9288.

# calendar

**Canada**

April 27-29—Congregational conflict resolution and mediation skills training seminars by Ron Kraybill, West Portal Mennonite Brethren Church, Saskatoon

May 25-27—MCC Canada Victim-Offender Ministries Conference, Trinity Western College, Langley, B.C.; theme: "Peoplehood and the Law"

May 26—MCC Ontario relief sale, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Western**

April 13-14—Mid-Kansas relief sale, Hutchinson, Kan.

May 6—Children's choir festival, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

May 11-12—Kansas Mennonite Renewal, Whitestone Mennonite Church, Hesston, Kan.

# ministers

*Ryan Ahlgrim* has become pastor of North-Peoria Mennonite Fellowship, Peoria, Ill., a newly formed congregation. He graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., last May.

*Arnold H. Curby* began serving as pastor of Saron Church, Orienta, Okla., on March 1.

*John R. Friesen* was installed as pastor of St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church on Jan. 8.

*John Reeser* was installed Feb. 19 as

*Friesen*

*Schrock*

## ASSINIBOINE TRAVEL SERVICE

### 1984 Mennonite World Conference Tours

Assiniboine Travel Service has arranged for a variety of all-inclusive tours to precede or follow the World Conference Assembly in Strasbourg, France, July 24-30, 1984. Detailed itineraries are available for each tour. The tours all combine educational input from knowledgeable hosts with leisurely touring. (If you wish to join a tour but not attend the Assembly, or if you wish to arrive earlier or stay later for private travel, we would be pleased to make alternative travel arrangements.)

1. **From Rome to Witmarsum —Church History Tour: June 30 - July 21, 1984.** Host: George Epp
2. **Soviet Union Tour: July 1-21, 1984.** Hosts: John Friesen and Abe Dueck
3. **The Church Through the Centuries: July 6-23, 1984.** Host: Waldemar Janzen
4. **Exploring the Middle East: July 9-23, 1984.** Hosts: David Schroeder and Gerald Gerbrandt
5. **CMC Choir Tour to Europe: July 13 - August 9, 1984.** Host: Helmut Harder; Music Director: Bernie Neufeld
6. **Exploring Renaissance and Reformation Centers: July 11 - August 9, 1984.** Hosts: Henry Krahn and Ken Reddig
7. **Austria, Hungary and the Soviet Union: July 29 - August 17, 1984.** Hosts: Al Reimer, John R. Friesen and Roy Vogt (Waiting list only)
8. **Central Europe Tour of Germany and Italy: July 30 - August 14, 1984.** Host: John Bergen
9. **Romantisches Deutschland Post Conference** Host: Elisabeth Peters

Contact: John Schroeder, Ruth Wiebe, Lori Neufeld, Hilda Driedger.

For complete details on these tours, please call:

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**The peace and justice office** of the Commission on Home Ministries and the youth education office of the Commission on Education have produced a packet of materials for young men who are required to register for the U.S. Selective Service System's draft. Packets were sent out in early March to all 17- and 18-year-olds whose names appeared on COE's youth census list. The packet was designed to help young men begin thinking about their convictions regarding military service. Packets are available from: Peace and Justice Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114 at no charge, though donations ($3 covers printing and postage) are appreciated.

**Mennonite Mutual Aid** has lowered the interest rates for church and institutional first mortgage loans. The interest rate for March was 11.75 percent, according to Kent Stucky, financial services vice president. Interest rates will be determined and announced at the beginning of each month.

# RECORD

pastor of Pleasant Oaks Church, Middlebury, Ind.

*John L. Schrock* was ordained Feb. 26 at Zion Church, Souderton, Pa., where he has served as pastor during the last year.

*Ward Shelly* began serving as interim pastor of Bethel Church, Fortuna, Mo., Jan. 29.

*Mark* and *Kathee Kime Stucky* were installed and licensed for ministry Jan. 15 at Calvary Church, Liberal, Kan.

## Leading minister needed

Effective summer 1985 or negotiable

**First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg,** requires leading minister (Aeltester) fluent in English and German.

Please contact:
Vic Wieler, Chairman, personnel committee
131 Wordsworth Way
Winnipeg, MB R3K 0J6
Telephone (204) 832-3012.

## Teacher needed

**United Mennonite Educational Institute,** Leamington, Ont., invites applications for a teacher with major responsibilities in the area of physical and health education, beginning September 1984.

For application forms write to:
Erwin Tiessen, principal
United Mennonite Educational Institute
Route 5
Leamington, ON N8H 3V8
(519) 326-7448.

UMEI is a private Mennonite secondary school. Teachers who are in sympathy with the Christian and Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective and who agree to cooperate with tenets of its faith are encouraged to apply.


## Catch a summer program at Goshen College June 17-22!

**Computer Seminar**, back by popular demand, offers high school sophomores, juniors and seniors a week's worth of experience in computer graphics with Pascal programming and BASIC games to learn about the structure and design of computers.

**Music Week**, in its 16th year at Goshen College, offers high school voice students and instrumentalists a chance to expand their musical knowledge in theory and experience as they rehearse and perform in vocal, string, jazz and wind ensembles under faculty instruction.

Computer Seminar and Music Week will challenge your talents and give you practical skills for high school, college, and for work. For details and an application for either event, call the Admissions Office at Goshen College toll free (800) 348-7422. Call collect, (219) 533-3161 from Indiana and Canada.

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## ...and When They Shall Ask

*A dramatic 90-minute documentary film on the history of the Russian Mennonites*

| | |
|---|---|
| Corn, Okla. | **Corn Bible Academy**<br>Monday, April 23<br>7:30 p.m. |
| Fairview, Okla. | **Fairview City Auditorium**<br>Tuesday, April 24<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Enid, Okla. | **Enid Mennonite Brethren Church**<br>Thursday, April 26<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Beatrice, Neb. | **Beatrice Mennonite Church**<br>Friday, April 27<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Huron, S.D. | **James Valley Christian High School**<br>Saturday, April 28<br>7:30 p.m. |
| Freeman, S.D. | **Freeman Junior College**<br>Sunday, April 29<br>3:00 p.m. |

Mennonite Media Society
202-1695 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB R2G 1P1
Phone: (204) 661-2483

# The weight of nothing

"Tell me the weight of a snowflake," a coal-mouse asked a wild dove.

"Nothing more than nothing," was the answer.

"In that case I must tell you a marvelous story," the coal-mouse said. "I sat on the branch of a fir, close to its trunk, when it began to snow, not heavily, not in a raging blizzard, no, just like in a dream, without any violence. Since I didn't have anything better to do, I counted the snowflakes settling on the twigs and needles of my branch. Their number was exactly 3,741,952. When the next snowflake dropped onto the branch—nothing more than nothing, as you say—the branch broke off."

Having said that, the coal-mouse flew away.

The dove, since Noah's time an authority on the matter, thought about the story for a while and finally said to herself: "Perhaps there is only one person's voice lacking for peace to come about in the world."

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*Let us do what is right without tiring of it: for at the proper time we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Galatians 6:9*

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*Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501*
*MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8*

# RESOURCES

**Seeking First the Kingdom** (Herald Press, 1983) by Robert A. Yoder is about the "holy disturbance" that takes place when faithfulness to the call of Jesus meets economic reality. Yoder believes "it is possible to be a part of the business world and also be a serious follower of Jesus Christ." It is available in quality paperback for $4.50 ($5.40 in Canada).

In his latest book, **When Caring Is Not Enough** (Herald Press, 1983), David Augsburger presents a 30-day plan for changing personal relationships through fair fighting, especially in marriage. It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.15 in Canada).

**Sanctuary**, an hour-long World Council of Churches film drama, pictures the fate of one family from the moment it is caught in the crossfire between opposing forces, through the various stages of the flight for survival, refugee existence, immigration procedures, and finally to adjustment to life in a country of resettlement. The film was to be distributed in the United States in early September along with a study guide for group discussion.

In an era of high urbanization, many children miss the pleasure of growing their own food and flowers. A new gardening book, **Celebrate the Seasons** by Linda Hunt, Marianne Frase and Doris Liebert (Herald Press, 1983), invites them to participate in growing and sharing nature's bounties. Like the authors' first book, **Loaves and Fishes** (a children's cookbook), **Celebrate the Seasons** blends instructions and insights. With a washable durable cover and horizontal quality paperback format, the book features full-color crayon drawings and water color paintings by children and is available for $6.95.

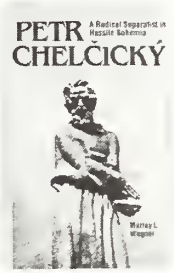
**Ruth, the Gentile Bride**, a commentary on the Book of Ruth, is available from John J. Janzen, Box 207, Hague, SK S0K 1X0, for $2.95.

**First Mennonite Villages in Russia, 1789-1943, Khortitsa-Rosental** by N. J. Kroeker is available from D. W. Friesen, Altona, MB R0G 0B0.

**Study War No More: A Peace Handbook for Youth**, edited by David S. Young, is available from Brethren Press, 1451 Dundee Ave., Elgin, IL 60521, for $3.95.

**Reaching the Unreached**, a report of the Canadian Consultation on Evangelism by Mariano Di Gangi, is available from Bible & Medical Missionary Fellowship, 4028 Sheppard Ave., East, Agincourt, ON M1S 1S6, for $1.50.

**Experiencing More with Less**, a 104-page manual by Meridith Sommers Dregni (Herald Press, 1983), is designed for families and groups of all ages to come together to play and sing, worship and experience the theme of living more simply, responsibly and lovingly. Based on the book **Living More with Less** by Doris Janzen Longacre (Herald Press, 1980), this curriculum provides a guide for five days of program. It is available in oversize format at $4.95 ($5.95 in Canada).




**I Can Make Peace** is a new record album for children ages 5-10, featuring stories and songs about peacemaking. It is available from MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501.

**Christian Education Resources Index** (CERI) is a review service provided by the Commission on Education to help you identify resources which can be used in the educational program of the church. The reviews are punched for filing in a three-ring binder. Each review is identified at the top to help file it in one of four categories: Audiovisual, Book Study, Drama or Workshop. The sheets are colored according to subject.

**Petr Chelcicky: A Radical Separatist in Hussite Bohemia** by Murray L. Wagner (Herald Press, 1983) is No. 25 in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series. It is published in hardcover for $19.95 ($23.95 in Canada).

The American Friends Service Committee has released **Taking Charge: the Struggle for Economic Justice**, a slideshow that serves as an informative introduction to the obstacles to global economic justice and the concentration of economic power in the Third World and in North America. It is available for purchase or rent from NARMIC/AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

**God's Chosen King**, book 4 of Eve MacMaster's projected 10-volume Herald Press Story Bible Series, tells about Samuel, Saul and David, God's promises to David's family, and the Psalms. It is available for $5.95 ($7.15 in Canada).

# film

## Redemption in Texas

**Tender Mercies**, *directed by Bruce Beresford, screenplay by Horton Foote*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editorial assistant for* The Mennonite

*Tender Mercies* tells a deceptively simple and subtly powerful story of a Country & Western singer, Max Sledge, who has hit bottom. Divorced from his second wife, who is now a C & W star, and suffering from alcoholism, Sledge (Robert Duvall) lands in west Texas in a motel run by a young widow (Tess Harper) with a small boy. The ex-singer has nowhere to go and asks to stay on and work. Transformation occurs as he marries the widow, then must encounter his past. He struggles with guilt, with his identity as a songwriter and with the profound question of what faith in God means in a world of injustice.

Director Beresford unfolds the story through many brief scenes, few longer than five minutes, which reflect the slow, episodic flow of life in west Texas. The emotional impact of the film builds slowly from this detached style of storytelling, but it is there. The depth of the characters, the convincing way in which they are portrayed, draw us close to them, draw out our empathy.

By the date of this issue the Academy Awards will have been presented. I doubt that *Tender Mercies* will have won best picture, though it deserves its nomination. However, Robert Duvall certainly deserves to win best actor. His portrayal of a down-and-out C & W singer is outstanding. He even wrote (as well as sang) most of the film's songs.

Shortly after Max and Sonny, his stepson, are baptized, they each say they don't feel any different. This serves as an understated foreshadowing, since both change remarkably as the story progresses. You too may be changed by this intimate, remarkable film.

# Chinese students eager, interested in the West

*Karen Wiebe*

Recently I returned from spending four months in People's Republic of China under the Study-Service Trimester (SST) program at Goshen (Ind.) College. This is the fourth year of an exchange between Goshen College and Sichuan Teacher's College, located in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Each year 10 professors from STC spend a year of study at Goshen, whereas 21 college students, with two faculty leaders, spend a trimester in China.

While we lived at STC we attended Chinese language class five hours a week. Between our speaking and writing abilities, we were able to get around town, speak with shop attendants and have short conversations with non-English-speaking Chinese. We also heard lectures on different aspects of China, including its history, politics, culture and customs.

In addition to studying, we taught conversational English for four hours a week. STC and other colleges in China are eager to have native English speakers teach their students. I taught 25 students in their senior year of English language study. Many of them have high levels of comprehension and speaking ability. Because only 4 percent of graduating high school students in China are able to attend college, students feel responsible to learn all they can to benefit themselves and add to the progress of their country. Many students are also disciplined in other activities, such as daily exercise. At 6:10 a.m. the first school bells ring and many get up to jog the track field, do vigorous exercises and *taiji*, a slow moving routine which exercises deep breathing, controlled body movement and concentration. Our group rose early with the crowds two mornings a week to learn this ancient Chinese sport.

A freshman at STC is assigned a room with six others and assigned a class of about 25, who study in the same field. For the next four years those roommates and classmates stay the same. I was impressed with how strong the friendships became among these people.

One incident in particular made me aware of this. Yang Li Xia, one of my women students, spent 10 days in the school hospital because of massive headaches. Several times I visited her there and each time there were other classmates in her room to run errands, prepare her meals and keep her company. She said that the women in her class took turns staying with her through the nights. I was moved to see these students give up their sleep, study and class time to care for her. It seemed not to be a duty for them but a genuine act from their hearts.

*Students Karen Wiebe (right) and Patty Byler (center) with Chinese friends*

During my stay, I enjoyed the Chinese custom of *xiuxi*, or an early afternoon rest. Classes broke for two hours and students and faculty took time to nap or relax. I saw Chinese to be more relaxed in how they spend their day than I'm accustomed to in the United States. I learned from them how to better enjoy my friendships. I appreciated Chinese friends who took time to talk, go to town or invite me to their home or dorm room. One Sunday I went with a friend to visit an *erhu* (Chinese folk violin) professor at the Sichuan Music Conservatory. He offered to help us purchase instruments, play for us and give us beginning lessons on how to hold and play the erhu. I was struck by his willingness to spend his weekend day teaching us.

The Chinese I talked with have much respect for their country and the progress it has made since liberation in 1949. Yet they also feel embarrassed by some of the great mistakes made by their government especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Many Chinese want to protect their country's image and do not feel free to share with foreigners all they've seen in their lifetimes. Yet because of the trust between our two schools, people were more willing to talk about China's past 40 years, although not without apprehension.

I co-taught one class on Mennonites and their beliefs in service and pacifism as well as the more recent issue of non-registration and the penalties which have come for some young men in the United States for refusing to register for the draft. The students were interested to hear of people who were willing to go to jail for what they believe to be right and they considered Mennonites' beliefs in service and pacifism to be "noble." One student said that Mennonites "think like the Chinese" regarding their value of service to others.

I had several opportunities to visit the Protestant church in downtown Chengdu and on one of these occasions some from our group went early one Sunday morning to visit with the pastor and deacons. The pastor said there were approximately 200 regular attenders, one-fourth of them young people. In talking with him and other members I saw a confidence that told me of their commitment to God. They wanted to work with their government in bringing progress to the Chinese people, yet their ultimate trust was in the Lord.

Throughout our stay at STC, there was constant reaffirmation by the students, staff and professors of wanting to continue the exchange between our schools and build on the friendship of the Chinese and American people.

*Karen Wiebe, 412 E. Washington, Goshen, IN 46526, graduated from Goshen College last year with a degree in music education. She is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan.*

## Thanks for the help

Thank you for "Questions I Wish I Could Ask" (Jan. 31 issue). I always appreciate Bernie's editorials, but this one dealt with some of the questions I've been asking myself. I attend a Mennonite church and would like to join the local body, but as yet I am unsure of my desire to affiliate with the General Conference. We need to be constantly questioning ourselves and each other. This is one way to keep in line with Scripture.

Thanks also for Mark Stucky's "The Chameleon of Idolatry." Too often we see the idolatry in others but fail to recognize and combat those things that come between ourselves and God. *Elaine L. Butler, 1841 N.E. 60th Ave., Portland, OR 97213* March 8

## Mennonites in the Middle East

I have just returned from my eighth visit to Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Again I was privileged to spend a day with Jakkob Amer, our Mennonite Central Committee Arab representative, as he made his contacts with Palestinian farmers in the Hebron area. In Cairo I spent a morning with Vern Ratzlaff, who heads the MCC work in Egypt. I saw Harold Dick briefly at the Palestine needlework center before he left for Cairo to organize a retreat for the MCC Middle East workers.

We in the United States and Canada need to know how unique and significant our presence is in the Middle East. I was amazed again at the tighter grip of the handshake when I said, "I am a Mennonite." The Arab farmers and their families were gracious everywhere we went. Jakkob is known and loved and respected seemingly by everyone in the villages and countryside.

As I left I said to Harold Dick, "What shall I tell our folk at home?" His quick reply, "Tell them there are people out here . . . human beings, families. They need our love, understanding, help and, above all, our prayers." *William H. Stauffer, Stone Creek, OH 43840* March 8

## The blood of Christ

With Easter being at hand, I raise the question whether we interpret the blood of Christ and the cross in its true meaning. Christ's blood was shed and he was nailed to the cross, but it was Christ who gave his life and made it possible for us to be saved. The blood and the cross are symbols of Christ's sacrificial life. It is Christ whom we worship, praise, honor and adore for what he did through his life and death for us. *E. R. Moser, Route 2, Road 2, 17849, Bluffton, OH 45817* March 14

## Moved to tears in Japan

"They Renewed a Broken Commitment" by Karren Boehr (Jan. 3 issue) moved me to tears.

It seems we live from crisis to crisis. So many of our counseling sessions deal with rough marriages where someone wants out. I wish we had time to write stories about them all. Each contact of this day could be a chapter in a book.

A recent visitor from the United States said, "I used to think the missionary ran the whole show. Today I changed my image of missionaries." That was after a Sunday morning worship service where a young Christian lady led the worship, two sisters sang, a whole family sang, and in general the local Christians did everything except preach the sermon.

Yes, we preach the good news of Christ. Yes, we distribute tracts. Yes, we have mass meetings. Yes, we have Sunday school and other children's meetings. The other times of the week we are in the stream of hurting humanity, babysitting, visiting the sick and lonely, spending hours looking for an apartment for a lonesome old man. Or just sitting and listening.

We are in the most exciting "business" in the world. Thanks for listening. We need that too. *Mary Derksen, 4 Kumi, Minami Ishigaki, Beppu Shi, Oita Ken 874, Japan* March 15

## Keep reviews coming

From the letters (Feb. 14 issue) I gather that the media/movie issue continues to concern Mennonites; three of the six letters dealt with movies shown on television and in theaters.

The response to the *Yentl* movie review particularly intrigued me. One reader responded that when going to the theater we should only attend Christian and historical movies because it is much harder to walk out of a movie than to turn off the television.

Another reader wrote that we don't need reviews because we can decide for ourselves when to turn off an offensive (TV) movie. This simple answer to movie decisions is not helpful when someone is trying to decide which movies are worth paying to see.

Some Christian films do not merit attention, and I can't figure out why historical movies have more value than films which "strike deeply at the prejudice, ignorance and social mores that separate men and women" (*The Mennonite*, Jan. 3), such as *Yentl*.

Complete avoidance of television and film, as another reader suggests, is unrealistic. While I don't condone the negative aspects of these media, I recognize their ability to expand my knowledge of the world and its variety of people.

I don't want to avoid media; I don't want to limit myself to narrow categories of films; however, I do want to see good movies, especially if I'm going to pay money to see them.

A movie review gives me guidance which is certainly more credible than information from an advertising pitch. Reviews don't dictate what I watch but rather provide me with information so I can make better decisions about movies to view. *Beth Preheim, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526* March 19

## Maybe I can say thanks

As God walks with us through the valleys and the chasms (Feb. 28 editorial) we have our chance to learn his grace and develop a faith so deep and true that from previous experiences we'd have called impossible.

Our youngest, Ann, was so badly hurt at age 19 that in spite of all minor miracles she could not regain the use of her muscles. For 16 years we were privileged to make her life worthwhile to her and to us. We communicated, though her speech muscles were affected. In this time the dilemma faced by the parents of Karen Quinlan was being aired. Ann felt they shouldn't pull the plug. So we knew life to her was still worth the effort, even though she'd lost most of her physical abilities.

We tried, oh Lord, how we tried. After the 16th year, my husband, who'd had strokes, died. We had been so grateful to have Ann that the long pull was as nothing. I cannot recall that either of us ever complained. Nor did we feel martyred. Ann died during the next year.

I'm glad for Ann that she has life everlasting which passes human understanding. I think I'll always be lonely for her, though I'm at a greater degree of peace. Maybe I can even say, "Thank you that his will was done." *Gwen Norton, 7712 N. Paulina, Chicago, IL 60626* March 19

# We made a pastoral visit to Jamaica

*Edwin Brandt*

When the Mennonite Church of Vernon, B.C., sent Peter and Jane Andres with their three boys to serve as Mennonite Central Committee workers in Jamaica, the hope was expressed that they would receive a pastoral visit during their four years away. That hope became reality in January.

When landing at Kingston, Jamaica, in the heat of that city and with all its strangeness, it was good to see Peter Andres through the windows waving his arms as we waited in line to get through customs.

**Discrimination.** Our first unusual experience in Jamaica came in the lineup at customs. Many of the Jamaicans had been abroad to visit, to shop or to seek employment. When the customs official spotted us "whites," we were waved to come to the head of the line and passed through, much to the frustration of the "black" Jamaicans. They had to unpack all their boxes, shopping bags, etc.

**Accepted into the local family.** Our baggage was quickly loaded into a small car and we wound our way through traffic, from the long peninsula through Kingston and to the Andres' home. We had actually arrived in Jamaica. After a quick wash up in cold water we were welcomed into the Andres family and MCC headquarters.

**Travel.** Since their Volkswagen was not in running condition, various ways had to be found to get around. The majority of our travel was by "public," as it is called. The public transportation is something else. No scheduled trips; each driver (owner) tries to get passengers and then takes off. A mini-bus which should hold from 15 to 16 passengers usually carries about 22. There was no air conditioning other than open windows, with the outside temperature around 30° C (85° F).

**Worship.** In Kingston we visited the Mennonite church next door. Since I was the Andres' pastor from Canada, I gave the morning message. With a child dedication and a Bible class, it became a three-hour session.

**Exposure.** A series of visits included: the high school of over 1,600 students, where Peter is teaching, the workshop for handicapped people where an MCC worker is giving leadership in woodcrafts, in standardization and sales. We saw the involvement MCC has in a blind school which needed much help and organization. We were entertained by an eye surgeon and his family. We were cordially hosted by a Jamaican pastor and his family at a Jamaican dinner. We were welcomed by a Jamaican family into their home. He was in charge of a large, famous park. Their daughter had become a pen pal to us through the Andres. We were overwhelmed by the openness and friendliness of the people. They spoke highly of the MCC workers. At a field day where students were divided into house leagues, I was asked to be a supporting person in the group in which this pen pal was a member. A medallion was hung around my neck (as a keepsake). I was treated to the free oranges provided for all participants. It felt good to be accepted.

*Temple Hall Mennonite Church in Kingston where Jane Andres works with the women*

**MCC in Jamaica.** I say this of our MCC people: They go about their work with joy. It was good to see their enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to Christ. They could draw good wages in Canada or the United States but they chose to give of their time and resources. It was good to be their guests and experience Jamaica with them.

*Edwin Brandt, Site 9, Comp. 21, Route 5, Vernon, BC V1T 6L8, is the pastor of the Vernon Church. His wife, Anne, accompanied him on this visit.*

*MCC headquarters in Kingston, Jamaica, home of the Andres and the guest house quarters*

## Prayer

*Susan Withers*

Pray,
my friend
pray
and in praying you shall seek
and in seeking
you will find
but only as you listen
then you will hear
with the hearing you must obey
and in obedience
you shall then live
pray,
my friend, pray
that you might then
discover life.

# Mennonites in France?

*John Longhurst*

Think France and you see Paris, Nice, Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower and Mennonites.

Mennonites?

France today is home to about 2,000 Mennonites, mostly located in the Alsace region, an area in eastern France which borders Germany and Switzerland. Anabaptists fleeing persecution in Switzerland came to the Alsace, then a part of Germany, in the 16th century. Many came to the region's largest city, Strasbourg. By 1607 Strasbourg had hosted six Anabaptist conferences.

You can be excused for not knowing much about Mennonites in France. According to Jean-Jacques Hirschy, chairman of the French Anabaptist historical committee, they themselves are ignorant of Mennonite history. At a lecture about Mennonites at the University of Strasbourg a year ago many students admitted that, although they lived in an area rich in Mennonite history, they had never heard about Mennonites before.

"In fact," says Hirschy, "many Frenchmen think that Mennonites are members of a strange religious sect."

He realizes it's hard for people in Canada and the United States to understand how Mennonites could be labeled a sect. "You don't have this problem; there are so many Mennonites there," he says. "But in France we are just a minority within a minority." Only 1.9 percent of France's 52 million people are Protestant; only 0.5 percent are evangelicals.

Hirschy was raised in a Mennonite family in the town of Ingersheim, a small community about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Strasbourg. The family home was destroyed during heavy fighting near the end of World War II. Hirschy's family benefited from Mennonite Central Committee assistance when the war was over. "The first chocolate I ever ate was MCC chocolate," he says. He became a Christian at the age of 18, attended Bible school and university in the 1950s and married his wife, Veronica, in 1960. He now owns and operates an accounting firm in Ingersheim.

Although many people in France are unfamiliar with Mennonites, Hirschy says there is interest in the Mennonite past and in our faith today. Students at the University of Strasbourg lecture responded with interest to Hirschy's comments about Mennonite distinctives, asking questions about pacifism, community and faith.

*Jean-Jacques and Veronica Hirschy—part of a minority within a minority*

He explains that when Mennonites in his area have held an evangelistic campaign there has been little response. But when a meeting about Anabaptist history is held, more than 100 people turn out each time. "These are people interested in our historical background and in what we believe," he shares, adding that "we will not have conversions at the meeting, of course. But we will begin relationships which can lead to conversions."

Hirschy is one of a few Mennonites in France actively promoting Anabaptism and Mennonite heritage.

He hopes the 1984 Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg will change those numbers. "I hope that the gathering will show French Mennonites that we have something unique to share with France." He expects that a gathering of World Conference magnitude will help the small French Mennonite group overcome a feeling of helplessness. "For this reason we are happy to be hosting the World Conference in Strasbourg," he says.

Hirschy also hopes that the size of the gathering, together with its large international representation, will come to the attention of the French media. "We hope Frenchmen will see that we have a historical tradition in France."

It is an interesting tradition. In 1848 the Alsace region was given to France and remained French until 1870, when the Germans took it back following the Franco-Prussian War. The area belonged to Germany until 1918; it was French again until 1940. Following the German defeat in 1945 the Alsace was returned to France.

Mennonites in the region were affected by the changing political allegiances. Since the area belonged to Germany twice, the German language was easily retained by French Mennonites. Services were conducted in German until 1945 and for some years after, although French is currently used for worship. Hirschy, who speaks French, German and English, often translates for older people in his congregation who still understand German better.

When you think about France in the future, what will you see? Hirschy hopes that Mennonites around the world will see more than just famous landmarks.

He hopes that you will think about and pray for Mennonites. *A Meetinghouse article*

*John Longhurst, 220-1301 Rothesay St., Winnipeg, MB R2G 1T9, currently works with MCC Canada information services. He was on assignment in Europe with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services in 1983 when he did research for this article.*

# Your face

*Perry Keidel*

From the beginning
I have sought your face,
that I might live
and walk in grace.

Your face I have not seen,
but lying faces in between
smiling, beckoning in tender breath;
fangs well-hidden, an offering for death.

"My footprints you may see,
but on my face you cannot gaze;
and you will not fall from grace,
if my pleasure you seek all your days."

# Upon my new birth in Christ

*Betty Gene Neuenschwander*

When you accept Christ in your heart,
you begin with a fresh new start.
You feel yourself beginning to break free,
to be the person you've always wanted to be.

You start by asking God to forgive you of your sins
and thank him for stopping what you might have been.
He gives you assurance at the start of each new day,
you know the holy Father has washed your sins away.

You turn the hurt and anger you feel inside
to Jesus Christ because in him you can confide.
He knows the aching that puts your heart on fire,
he whispers God's words in your minds to inspire.

You know you're no longer alone or afraid
because of the eternal, everlasting friend you've made.
He's always by your side though one set of footprints you see.
It's in the times of tests and trials you can say, "He carried me."

We all must come to God in a childlike faith.
He'll always receive us, we never have to wait.
Simply all we do is ask Christ into our heart
because it is only through his Son God gives us our new start.

In his house of many mansions he's prepared a place for you.
Because of your loyalty to him, his love for you is never through.

# An unusual Easter

*Angela Rempel*

"Alleluia"—the universal word for praising God—was the only word I, a foreign visitor, could sing together with the Japanese Christians on Easter Sunday. "Christ the Lord is risen today." How does one visibly express this truth?

Sunday school and worship at the Mennonite church in Hyuga, Japan, were not unlike simple Easter services in Kansas. But after church the whole congregation went to the cemetery several miles away. There, at the recently purchased plot for deceased church members, amidst hundreds of tombstones, we read Scripture, sang hymns and prayed.

After the short service, everyone joined in a picnic lunch. A large piece of blue plastic was spread on a grassy spot at the edge of the cemetery. Each family provided its own food, attractively arranged. Eating without a table or chairs was no problem for the Japanese. They are accustomed to sitting on the floor. Although the sun was shining brightly, the wind was cool. Several cars were parked around the plastic as a windbreak.

Although not many other people were in the cemetery, it was a way for the church people to emphasize the difference Christianity makes. Japanese traditionally have honored the deceased by worshiping and sacrificing to their spirits. A believer in a non-Christian family is pressured to conform to the family rituals and customs. Missionaries with the Commission on Overseas Mission, such as Peter and Lois Voran, who serve the Hyuga Church, work together with the believers in finding ways to focus on the living Christ and to properly remember those who have died.

# MEDITATION

## He prays through the night

There are still thin, jagged ice chips along the edges of the lake at Camp Men-O-Lan in eastern Pennsylvania. The rowboats and the barge, movable by pulley ropes, wait patiently for campers to come.

There will be campers like Erich, whose mother pinned sets of clothes together for him. Erich wore only two sets. Five came home clean. It was Erich's first year at camp and his mother called every night.

In the woods around the lake the spring beauties and dogtooth violets are stretching and waking up. The trees will soon wear green.

It is nearly midnight at Camp Men-O-Lan. A single light is burning in one of the camp buildings. Ray Linberger, camp administrator, spends one night each March from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. in prayer for the camp program. He asks others to join him, but it is usually only he who prays through the night. Some people do come for the evening hours until midnight.

Ray wants the camp program to be meaningful to the campers and to help meet the needs of all who drive into the lovely wooded setting. There are benches and swings, paths to explore, a campfire setting, a comfortable porch and a barge ride on the lake.

By the time Ray is finished with the prayer list for the new year of camp activities, he has prayed for hundreds of people. His long-eared, black-haired dog, Shep, stays with him all night. At times during his all-night prayer vigil Ray plays his trumpet and sings hymns. Shep wants him to throw an old rubber overshoe for him, but he tries to be patient until morning.

Ray prays for a dedicated, willing, warm, Spirit-filled staff, for close staff-to-camper relationships, for good camper-to-camper relationships, for cooperative staff-to-staff relationships. He prays for pioneer camp and follow-up. He prays for the Men-O-Lan board.

He prays for the individuals who will be counselors, pool director, nurse, nature director, music director, lake director, waitresses, dishwasher, Bible teachers, cooks, kitchen help and missionaries. He prays for the daily program of the weekly retreats. He prays for other ongoing events such as Memorial Day weekend, Labor Day weekend, workdays, senior citizens, quarterly meetings, Christmas dinner and weekend groups.

The day before it rained hard. But for the ministers and their wives who come for breakfast to give Ray support it is sunny and beautiful. Shep can hardly wait until breakfast is over so that Ray can throw his rubber overshoe. Neither Ray nor Shep look as though they have missed a night of sleep. They are as energetic as usual.

Everything at the camp looks inviting, washed clean from the rain, and breakfast gives out a delightful aroma. There is creamed dried beef on toast, funnel cake and shoofly pie. Ray seems to have a special aura about him because he has spent a long night with his heavenly Father.

We who come this day in March to pray with him after breakfast are sure that it will be a wonderful year for all who come to Camp Men-O-Lan.

*Geraldine Harder*



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Lent, Passion Week and Easter exhaust the range of experience and emotion. We are taken through persecution, a near coronation, betrayal, suffering, death and resurrection. Just the thought tests the imagination. Somehow in all the furies and the ecstasies we find Easter. Our prayer is that the range of articles in this issue might help us too to know the essence of Easter.


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# editorial

## *The stone was rolled back*

Some of the sports heroes tell us that winning is everything. Sports often has no place for losers or failures.

It is one reason many of us feel uneasy in the presence of superstars. We know the agonies of defeat in our families, at work and even in our faith commitments. In a culture for winners, we often hide and become spectators to the superstars. Within ourselves we feel apologetic and begin to doubt God has a place for us.

Easter tells a different story. Contrary to Vince Lombardi or any other athletic pope, God writes history in a unique way. Easter shows that losers can become winners. Seeming failures turn the world inside out.

Friday the Son of God hung alone between two thieves on Calvary's hill. Friends watched in fear. Following an unusually quick death and a test to insure death, his body was given away and laid in a tomb. Fearing further intrusions upon him due to this forlorn failure, Pilate had the tomb sealed with a stone and a guard placed round the clock. "Final solution" was the stamp upon the brief chapter of Jesus Christ.

The sabbath came and went. The world returned to its course. Life must go on.

But somehow there are always those who listen and wait for the still, small voice of God.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome (Mark 16:1) bought spices and went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body as early as decently possible.

They knew his body lay in a stone-sealed tomb. They knew their mission was one of little hope.

Failures are often unsure of what to do next. Sometimes they go on just for something to do. Suddenly, looking up (Was it in prayer?), they saw that the large stone was rolled back (Mark 16:4).

Shocked and overcome, the women sought answers. Failures often look to others for solutions. We become afraid of the truth within ourselves.

Easter can be confusing. Everybody loves a Christmas with angel choirs, shepherds, wise men, a baby, gifts and even a nostalgic barn.

Not so Easter. Have you seen ads of thorny crowns, gamblers over clothes, betrayal, death and a tomb? Easter is the church's number one holy day, but not in the ratings. We have to sweeten it with candy eggs, chocolate bunnies and dress parades.

Things happened fast after the women found an empty tomb. All four Gospels vibrate with new life upon the Easter disclosure.

Easter is like that. It confronts our values and lifestyles with a miraculous dynamic.

Simon, the son of Jonah, Jesus had named Peter the rock. What a travesty! Peter promptly abandoned Jesus and three times denied ever having seen Jesus. When he heard the cock crow, he turned away and wept bitterly—a strange brand of stone.

But even as Jesus' body was being laid in the Arimathean's tomb for miraculous resurrection by God, the Simon in Peter was also being transformed. The arrogant bravados, the impetuous stubbornness gave way to Peter, the rock upon whom Jesus built the church.

The good news of Easter is that God is a rock specialist. He sees the pearls in human shells. God does not paint over the bad news of failure and fear as we often want to when we speak of God's love to unbelievers.

Easter shows that no matter how severe your hurts, even if you consider yourself the worst failure on earth, God can roll away the stone. God specializes in moving large rocks. His merciful grace eclipses our failures. His love lifts us from graves of hopelessness to life on the solid rock, the resurrected Jesus.

To all stony hearts and minds confused by the gravel of doubt, the stone was rolled back for you and me. Jesus lives. Because he lives, Simons become Peters, sinners become saints.

Easter wants to roll back any stones that keep you from new life in Christ. Look to Jesus and live with him forever. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

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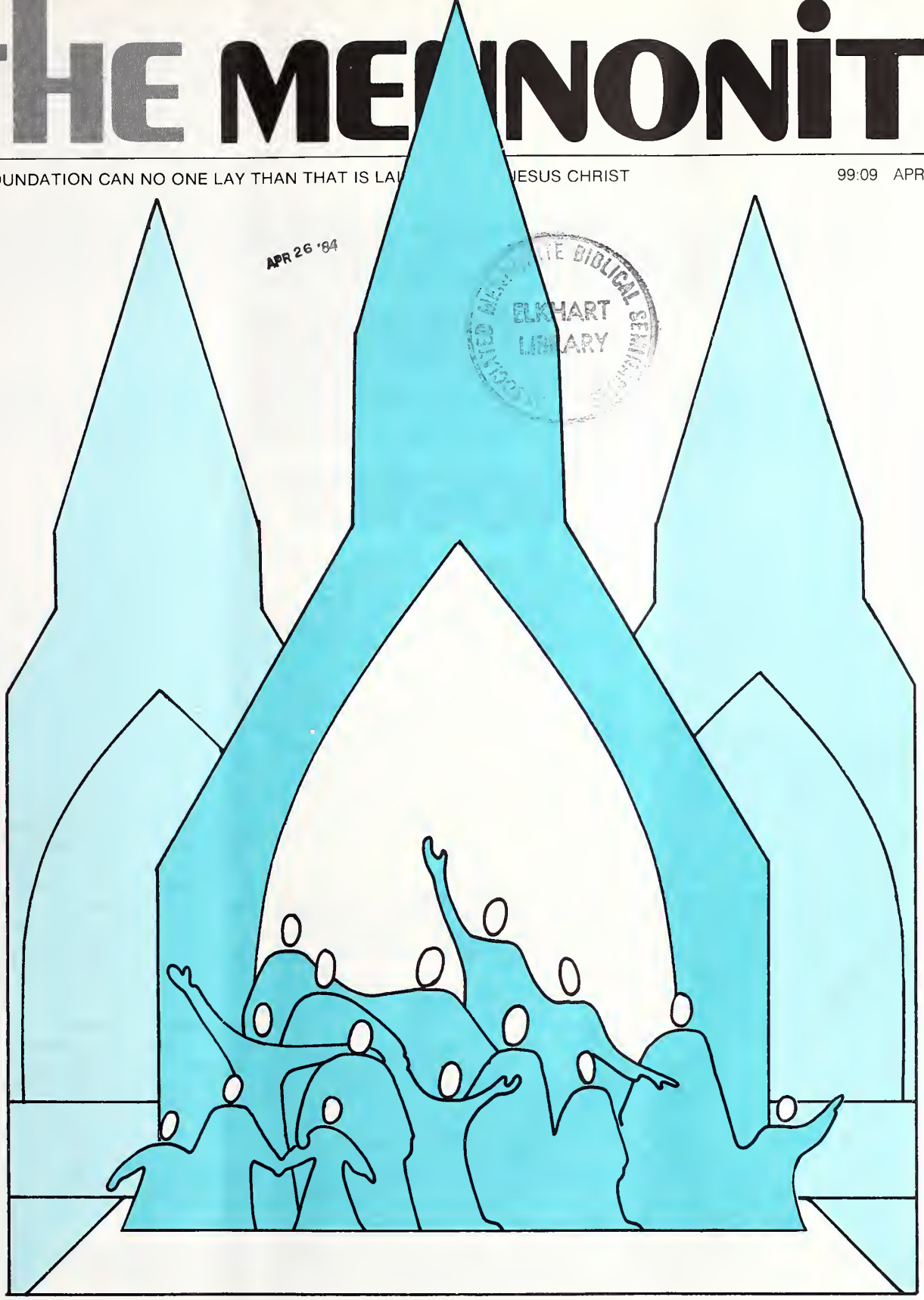


## Inside this Mennonite Biblical Seminary issue:


From disquiet to discovery

Tears of God

Stewardship includes church buildings

*Gordon Krause*

# When student becomes pastor

"Reverend Krause?" Let's see, Jesus was filled with power and authority to preach, teach and heal. . . . "Reverend Krause?!" The secretary next door has been trying to get my attention, but somehow I have not made the connection between "Reverend Krause" and myself. It feels strange to be called Reverend when only a short time ago I was just Gordon Krause, ordinary layperson. In one short month I have been transformed from Gordon Krause, Mennonite Biblical Seminary student, to Reverend Krause, pastor of the Mankato Mennonite Church. I am now preacher, teacher, counselor, administrator, theologian and man of God. That is heady stuff for a person who only four weeks earlier was struggling with the doctrine of atonement in Introduction to Theology.

When people ask me how it feels to be a minister, I am not quite sure how to reply. I have received no special revelations. I have seen no visions. I have not been visited by an angel in a dream. In fact, I don't feel much different as a pastor than I did as a layperson. I am the same person being Reverend Krause as I was being Gordon Krause, seminary student. What I am doing now as a pastor is not so much different from what I did as a seminary student. I am still studying the Bible and seeking to meet human needs with answers from God's Word. The preparation I did for course requirements is similar to the preparation I do for preaching, teaching or counseling. That is the way it should be. The professors assigned work which was close to the tasks I now face in the ministry. The only difference between course work and pastoral work that I can see is that I paid to study at Elkhart, Ind., but now I get paid to study in the congregation.

As I reflect on my seminary training from the perspective of one month in the pastorate, I realize that my professors did not so much give me answers to the questions I now face but introduced me to tools and taught me how to use those tools in finding my own answers. I write my sermons and preach them as I learned in preaching class. I have learned to use concordances, Bible dictionaries and Bible commentaries to illuminate the Scriptures. When I sit with a person in a counseling situation, I recall the training I received in Pastoral Counseling. When I plan my weekly activities, I think of Pastoral Leadership class and the advice to budget my time.

I learned many things at MBS for which I am thankful now that I am a pastor. I have learned to discipline my work and study habits. I have learned to trust God for my vocation and for my life. I did not go to seminary to become a pastor. There were other Christian ministries which I wanted to do, but through the Church and Ministry course, through my K-group and through a Supervised Experience in Ministry, God called me to serve him in pastoral ministry.

How does it feel to be a pastor after one month? It feels great. I have never felt more sure of God's purpose for my life. When I preach a sermon, teach a class or counsel with someone, I know that I am sharing in the greatest work on earth: proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Christ Jesus. I still might not respond if someone calls me Reverend Krause, but I do know who I am as a servant of God in pastoral ministry. •

**The seminary community takes holy communion at Christmas 1983.**

*Gordon Krause graduated from MBS and was installed as pastor of the Mankato Mennonite Church, Box 3192, Mankato, MN 56002, on Feb. 12.*

*David and Eleanor Stobbe*

# We want to minister as a couple

The process of our preparing for ministry has been one of moving beyond some of the stereotypes of a pastor-spouse ministry to a new vision. We want to work as a couple in the pastorate. This vision opens new horizons for us as individuals and as a couple.

Prior to coming to seminary we had often toyed with the potential and possibilities of together working at ministry. This was seen as only coming about after the kids were grown. Our studies and our discoveries of what makes us individuals has opened us to some new approaches about ministry and who can be a minister. We recognize that ministry cannot be defined by role limitations or stereotypes. It is defined by the relationship we have with our Lord Jesus Christ. He has modeled and continues to model for us exactly what it means for us to be whole persons who are then called to minister.

Preparing for ministry is not just a meshing of our personalities into the corporate character of our marriage. It is a discernment of who we are as individuals, what our gifts are and how they can be used in the church. Once some of these questions are answered, then we are able to put them into the context of our marriage and how that will shape our ministry.

The process of laying a foundation for ministry together is not without difficulties. We find we must take a lot of time to deal with our own adjustments, our own identity questions, our individual insecurities and the new definitions we seek. Time must be taken to determine how we are going to live out these new dimensions in the context of marriage and careers.

A key idea in our search has been the concept of being pioneers. Our exploration is moving us past some of the older cultural stereotypes and roles, and is opening our eyes and ears to new areas of ministry to which Christ is calling us. Being on the frontier has both a lonely feeling and a feeling of excitement. We are working at new roles we cannot yet concretely visualize and we are dealing with our own high expectations and ideals.

We see a lot more positive aspects than negative ones. As we grow in Christ we are beginning to recognize the pluses of both of us being pastors. Each brings a unique contribution to the ministry. As male and female we offer new insights and new models of how others can be included in the church.

Preparing for ministry as a couple is not just the preparation of some nice package deal in which a congregation gets two pastors for the price of one. Our preparation at Mennonite Biblical Seminary is inviting each of us to exercise and develop to wholeness the gifts that God has given us. •

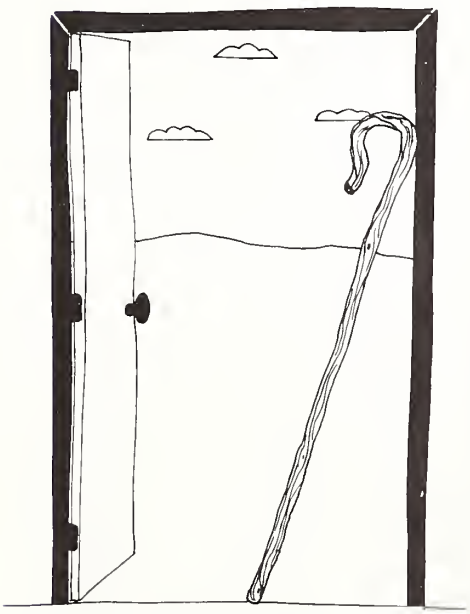
*David and Eleanor Stobbe are senior and middler students at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517. David comes from Winkler, Man. (Bergthaler Church), and Eleanor from St. Catharines, Ont. (United Mennonite Church).*

**Professor Howard Charles teaches a class on 1 Corinthians at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries' January 1984 interterm. A number of GC pastors and spouses participated.**

*Ruth Keidel*

# From disquiet to discovery

It was 11:30 p.m. in Kinshasa, Zaire, as the group of MCC workers and other young missionary types walked out my apartment door. Their laughter still hung in the air. What a good, solid, fun bunch of friends, I thought. This MCC Zaire experience has certainly been positive in terms of fellowship. What's going to happen when July comes and I return to the United States to pursue bigger and better things? Having grown up in Africa and lived a transient life, I've never put down roots in any one community. My need for community is real. Where can I go to be guaranteed the support I need as I readjust to the United States after this MCC term?



**Many "doors" were opened to me by God's Spirit while I was at seminary.**

In Zaire I came into contact with North American Christians from all walks of life and personal philosophies. Embassy personnel who had no qualms about living a materialistic lifestyle in the midst of a poverty-stricken country. There were missionaries who allowed their prejudice against African people to become blatant at times. Some MCC workers didn't believe in life after death as I understood it. Through contact and discussion with these people, a lot of my theological presuppositions were challenged. I sensed a growing need to take time out to explore my own understanding of theological and lifestyle issues.

In sharing concerns with me, an MCC worker said, "Ruth, I can't stand my living situation, and trying to teach those Zairians English is driving me crazy. They couldn't care less about my classes. Why did MCC send me here? Isn't there any possibility of transferring?" Seeing the pain etched on her face and understanding some of the frustration she was going through in her daily routine made me want to relieve some of that suffering. Out of experiences like this came the awareness of my need to learn how to be an effective helper in such situations.

My decision to attend Mennonite Biblical Seminary last fall was based on a hope that these three basic needs would be met. It was probably the best decision I could have made.

One of the nicest things about seminary is its emphasis on community. Although studies can be time consuming, there are ways to show community support to one another. My involvement in a K-group (a small fellowship of 10 people) was a beautiful experience. The atmosphere of mutual caring and support made the transition to a new situation much easier. The chapel services three times each week were enriching, a good chance to pause for worship in the middle of a full schedule.

Being in an atmosphere where different theological ideas were being aired all the time gave me an awareness of God's generosity of spirit in meeting us where we are as individuals, in spite of the differences among us. I became involved in a weekly time of guided meditation and spiritual formation. I attended a silent weekend retreat in which we were given guidance in prayer, meditation and journaling. This opened up a whole new area of learning that deepened my walk with God and gave me a deeper understanding of my own responses to God and to other people.

Because of my interest in the area of counseling, I took two classes related to that area. It was a valuable experience to learn to analyze a person's psychological struggles from a theological perspective. I was also encouraged to take a realistic look at my own struggles and given a deeper understanding of myself.

My semester at seminary fulfilled my basic hopes. It provided an accepting Christian community where I found support in transition. It gave me an atmosphere conducive to the process of reevaluating my theological presuppositions. The counseling courses gave me a Christian/theological perspective which will help me as I integrate those ideas in further studies in counseling and personnel at Western Michigan University. •

*Ruth Keidel, 1314 Concord Place, Apt. 3B, Kalamazoo, MI 49009, grew up as a "missionary kid" in Zaire.*

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*Jacob F. Pauls*

# This pastor enjoyed the ivory tower

If most people think of seminary as an ivory tower (I believe they do), then you could say I recently spent four months in an ivory tower. Having received a study leave from the congregation I serve as pastor (Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg), I decided to enroll at Mennonite Biblical Seminary for the fall semester. This was a daring decision. But having had a good experience there once before, I decided to try a visit.

Yes, I had apprehensions about going. Would I still be able to handle a full academic load? Would the students accept me? After all, by now I had more years in the ministry than most of the students had in chronological age. But most of all I kept asking myself what I was seeking at MBS. Why there? What is it I really want? These questions stayed with me throughout the semester and even today can only be answered in part. But the semester has also become part of the answer, and my experience will become a family where all felt at home.

It wasn't long after Dorothy and I settled into our apartment that I realized how important the getting away from my routine pastoral responsibilites in the church had to be. Not in the least rejecting or belittling the many duties of a pastor—sermon preparation, attending meetings, counseling, planning church programs—from this distance and this detached stance I was able to see how much these duties and responsibilities had become dominant in my life. As a person I had become almost transparent and unknown to myself. Who was I besides what I did? Being away from it all made me search myself, and the settings at the seminary and the many new relationships helped me find myself again. Many of the students and professors will never know what they did for me in this respect. I thank God for them.

Nurturing my own spirit, intellect and faith became another significant factor. While being busy nurturing others I had become seriously undernourished myself. I discovered this when, almost in desperation for something to do (we deliberately had no telephone or television) after arriving, I began to read. I was amazed. Books which I seldom read—even though in my library at home—because I thought they were too theoretical or too long were now strangely helpful. I had simply never been relaxed enough and taken enough time to read and enjoy the depth of content. I read eagerly. Perhaps the problem is a unique one to pastors. While studying and reading all the time, we are also quietly gathering wool for the next sermon or formulating a defense of the faith. It was good to study without this pressure.

Pastors are usually told to be self-starters—set priorities and schedules. While not always easy, I found it good for me and rewarding to search for answers and raise questions under the directions of another. It still allowed me to follow through on some of my own issues, but the direction was set by someone who had worked at this before. I found myself stimulated again and even noting creative ideas and thoughts for my future ministry. Hard work produced some precious results.

This sounds academic. Yet one of the most precious gains from our time in the ivory tower came along a different route altogether. Dorothy and I had decided we would take one course together. The course we chose dealt with marriage therapy and counseling. We had never taken a course together and it wasn't easy for me as a pastor—the one who helps all the others—to face my wife and my marriage in this way. Sometimes the lectures and the exercises led to long discussions at home. How many liabilities does a pastor bring to a marriage? What does it take to endure as a marriage partner to a pastor? I am grateful that we were able to find each other as marriage partners again in a new way. Not only do we understand each other and the particular weaknesses we each have in a better way, but we also love each other more because of the experience. There have even been necessary vows to change some things.

Mennonite Biblical Seminary is committed to being a community of faith. I had read the lengthy statement about this in the catalog, but to see the practice of this ideal, even if only in part, was a joy. I wished that our congregations could look in to see what worship could mean, what caring and sharing could look like, how spiritual growth could be pursued with prayer, how difficult issues could be dealt with and how many heretofore unknown people could become a family where all felt at home •

**C. J. Dyck teaches a January 1984 interterm class on Anabaptist history and theology.**

*Jacob F. Pauls, pastor of the Bethel Church, 870 Carter Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3M 2E2, spent a sabbatical semester at MBS in the fall of 1983.*

*Edmund Pries*

# No longer 'quiet in the land'

I am a dreamer. I enjoy dreaming. So do most people.

I am also a committed member of the Body of Christ, the church, and I feel a love for my branch of that body—the Mennonite church.

When I ponder my commitment to the Mennonite body, I dream, envisioning the many opportunities that I, together with all my sisters and brothers in the Mennonite church, have of living out the calling to follow Christ Jesus.

No longer will we be content to be the "quiet in the land." It is sad to me that being the quiet ones has sometimes been a source of pride. We are called to reach out and share the Good News with our neighbors in society, both immediate and global. Thus our church must become more involved in identifying with and sharing the pain and hurt of those around us, serving with the healing presence and love of Jesus. It is my dream that every Mennonite congregation would have a voluntary service unit attached to it.

No longer being the quiet in the land also means for me more speaking out—making our witness audible. We need to preach the Word of God with the power and vitality of the Spirit, exalting the values of the kingdom and calling into question the prevalent values of our society. We need to raise high the lordship of Christ and witness against the lordship of Caesar, Mammon or Moloch. Can we recover the preaching of the early church apostles or others in our church history? Our preaching needs to call people to a new life in Christ that is not another form of an old life. Such witness will send out men and women to preach, plant and nourish other Christians in the Jesus way and in the inevitable setting up of new Christian communities around the world.

**It is good to dream. But we must put the dreams into actions. No longer can we be content to be the "quiet in the land."**

I dream that our deed-word witness will be a wholistic proclamation of the gospel. Peace and justice, which are often seen as unrelated or peripheral, will be central to the messianic mission of Christ. When the Prince of Peace is heralded into this world with words such as "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth," and when the purpose of Jesus' life, death and resurrection is summarized as reconciliation between God and people, and between people and other people (2 Corinthians 5, Ephesians 2, Galatians 3), how can we say the Christian message is not one of peace? In a world of hatred, enmity, war and preparation for total mutilation of brothers and sisters on opposite sides of the globe, this message of Christ is of utmost relevance and urgency.

We have a message of peace and love to proclaim. We cannot allow ourselves to be unfaithful to that message by being the quiet (or silent) in the land, or we will need to answer the statement, "I was blinded by hatred and mistrust of my neighbor and you kept your message of love and peace to yourself."

I hope we will no longer be ashamed of our Anabaptist-Mennonite label. Discipleship, a total-life response and the lordship of Christ are not options for those who call themselves Christians.

We will grow as a worshiping community and this will draw us to greater unity. In worshiping one Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we are drawn into closer fellowship as one body.

It is important that we become open to using *all* the gifts, including those which have been traditionally left out. We shortchange ourselves and our fellowship with each other when we exclude the gifts of any group or individual. Let us involve the men *and* the women, the children *and* the elderly, the well-trained and polished *and* the less polished or differently abled (often referred to as handicapped). There is no gift given by God that cannot be used for good.

Yes, I have dreams and visions for fellowship and working with my sisters and brothers in the church. I envision that we will earnestly study the Bible together and share our learning with others. I have a dream that we will give people forks and teach them how to use them rather than drink milk all their lives. Thus the fruits of our Spirit-guided study we will share with others and. . . .

No longer will we be content to be the quiet in the land. •

*Edmund Pries, a senior student at MBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, served as pastor at Carman, Man., before coming to seminary. With him are his wife, Joan, and daughter, Kari.*

# Tears of God

*Werner Franz*

Easter has again reminded us of suffering. Jesus, just hours before he was nailed to the cross, was crying out in desperation, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. . . . Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mark 14:34, 36). The cup here refers to the painful death Jesus would experience on behalf of a sinful creation.

These cries of Jesus may not impress us as extraordinary until we allow ourselves to be drawn close to Jesus in the hours before he was arrested. It is then that we feel with Jesus the overwhelming tragedy of the hour. Not only had the political and religious leaders turned against him, not only did Jesus know that he was going to die, more cruelly, Jesus was forced to come to grips with the shuddering thought that the small band of disciples would be dispersed, that the only visible sign of his entire ministry would fall to pieces and cease to exist. Only when we realize and consider seriously that Jesus experienced these struggles as a person, a human being, can we imagine the probable impact of this on him.

*Glass sculptor Hans Godo Frabel created this crystal crucifix, representing Christ's "moment of angst."*

Let us return to Jesus a few hours later when he had been hanging on the cross for three painful hours. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" he cried (Mark 15:34). These are uttermost desperation words of a man who had a close relationship with his loving and beloved father, a relationship which on the cross was called into question. Did God hear this cry? Where was God when Jesus was struggling in the Garden of Gethsemane? Where was God when Jesus hung on the cross—bleeding, hurting, crying?

God was right there. God was there with Jesus. God was there like a caring mother, and I can imagine tears rolling down out of the eyes of God.

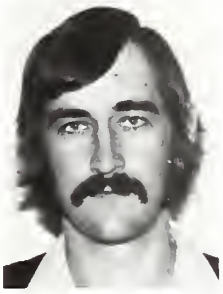
This is the same God who was there when Mike and Emily Klassen struggled through the pain of having a child with Down's Syndrome. Their insights growing out of their experience became an inspiration for me: "We believe that God cried with us over the unexplainable mistake that occurred in Scott's prenatal development" (see "A Letter" in *The Mennonite*, Sept. 27, 1983, p. 461). God was there.

This is the same God of whom many Central American Christians sing over and over again in the refrain of the so-called Nicaraguan rural mass (translated by LaVerne Rutschman):

You are the God of the poor
The God who's human and simple
The God who sweats in the street
The God with the leathery face
Therefore I speak with you
Just like my people do
Because you are the laboring God
The working Christ.

When I hear Jesus radically doubting the faithfulness of the God whom he used to call father, I am encouraged. At that point I know God will appear much closer to all who have struggled deeply through the question, My God, why have you forsaken me?

God was there when Jesus died. He was there when Mike and Emily struggled against accepting cheap answers to a deep pain. He is there when thousands (millions?) of poor and oppressed people don't see a way out of misery and death. God is there, and I can see tears streaming down out of caring eyes: tears of Good Friday and tears of Easter.



*Werner Franz is a senior at Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Upon graduation this spring he plans to return to Asuncion, Paraguay, and teach in the Mennonite seminary there.*

## Listen

*DeLores Gugler*

Listen to Life
in the downbeat
of raindrop's torrent.

Listen to Love
in the upbeat
of mystery's music.

Listen to God
in the heartbeat
of nature's rhythm.

Listen to Eternity
in the drumbeat
of eagle's soaring.

Listen to Freedom
in the wingbeat
of death's birth day.

Listen to your Song
in the soulbeat
of your being!

# Learning also comes by doing

*Berni Kaufman*

"Here it is, Lord, October of my middler (second) year. The novelty of the classes has worn off. The schedule of classes, the books and the study schedule have become routine. Where's the spice to this sterile existence? Lord, is this really what I want to do?"

This is a prayer of a disillusioned, desperate student. I had completed the one year I had come to take at Elkhart. (I had come for a year before going into overseas missions. The direction of God clearly led me to seminary. The voice of God, redirecting me to a broader ministry than missions, was evident after only a few weeks at MBS the first year.) The cloud of doubt, the spinning of my wheels was depressing after the signs had been so clear before.

I had dropped classes and changed the status of others in order to ease my frustrations. The question of purpose kept gnawing at me. Coming back a second year seemed to be making an eventual commitment to ministry. At this time I didn't go deeper to check out the call of God within. I asked the question in terms of the dollar sign, the reality of women in ministry and my own interests.

One day I read the job openings on the bulletin board. Ross Bender, a professor, walked by and commented, "You ought to check some of those out." A sign . . . this could be a way of testing out the possibility of ministry for me.

I began working at Goshen City Church of the Brethren in November 1982. I was hired to work as an education assistant, basically with church school education.

A major job is securing and facilitating teachers. Our Christian education task force of five coordinators is a big help. Throughout the year we have teachers' meetings, training sessions and workshops.

An important date on our church calendar is Education Sunday. We choose a date in early March (midpoint of the church school year). The worship service revolves around the education theme (I have preached on that Sunday). The sermon speaks to the nurturing of the faith and the church's responsibility in that.

Education Sunday is a day to recognize the teachers. The names are printed in the bulletin, they are lifted up by a litany, responsive reading or unison prayer. Most of all, it's a reminder to support the teachers and each other.

Bible school was a big event of the summer. We had decided to collaborate with another church in town. I was to lead opening assembly five out of the 10 days. We realized the first day that the 3-year-old children were coming out of the woodwork. Another class was needed with another teacher. With teacher's guide in hand and 12 scared 3-year-olds, I set off to teach.

I was richly blessed. At the program on the last evening, I and the other teachers were given awards. My award was Instant Teacher: No you're not . . . Oh, yes you are . . . award.

My list of ministry possibilities could go on—writing curriculum, planning and leading worship, assisting in special services (child dedication, installations), doing youth work. I realize I have had many opportunities for learning that could not come out of a book or from the wisdom of the professors and students. Learning also happens on the job.

The gnawing questions alluded to earlier? I hear the voice of God within and I continue to respond. I proceed on the path toward ministry. I claim the call. I have resigned at City Church, effective July 1, to complete my seminary work.

*Individual churches—whether rural or urban—serve as the proving grounds for pastors, educators and other church workers. This tiny church stands on the South Dakota prairie.*

*Berni Kaufman is a middler student at MBS who comes from the Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.*

# We are learning also from the church

*Pat McFarren*

When my wife, Jan, and I moved to Elkhart, Ind., in the summer of 1981 we thought we would visit a number of churches—Mennonite and non-Mennonite—and then choose one. The choice was more difficult than we had anticipated because we enjoyed and felt welcomed by every congregation we visited. One of these was the Silver Street Mennonite Church of Goshen. After prayerful consideration we chose Silver Street and have felt good about that choice ever since.

There is much about Silver Street we have appreciated. We were invited to share in the congregation through participation in fellowship and worship, in present program and in vision, in work and in play. We found the people willing to invest themselves in us, which led to our investment in and with them.

The greatest value of identifying with a specific congregation while attending seminary has been mutual investment. I have talked with other students who have experienced other local congregations in the same way Jan and I have experienced Silver Street.

The Silver Street congregation has a gifts discernment committee which compiles the gifts, talents and interests of church members and regular attenders. Each quarter a worship schedule is sent out listing the various items contributing to the worship service such as worship leader, children's story, greeters, organist, etc. Using the compilation of the gifts discernment committee, the worship committee selects individuals to assume these various responsibilities. In this way many people are actively involved in leading the Sunday morning service, according to their gifts and their willingness to use those gifts. This source is also used in other areas of congregational life.

We were invited to share our gifts, offer our talents and ideas, and generally contribute to congregational life. Jan's experience in teaching Sunday school lent itself to teaching several quarters at Silver Street. Her talents, gifts and experience in arts and crafts have been tapped in banner making for the church and doing some artwork for individuals within the congregation.

As a seminary student preparing for pastoral ministry, I have found involvement with Silver Street conducive to the development of a pastoral identity, helpful in developing the skills of a ministering person, valuable as a context in which to apply or test the relevancy of academic concepts and generally a setting which helps put and keep book learning in perspective.

*No, this is not the Silver Street Church. It is part of the congregation at a Saturday service in the Karaganda, USSR, Mennonite Brethren church last July. There is much to learn from each congregation.*

The seminary curriculum encourages students to do several practicums or SEMs (Supervised Experience in Ministry). At Silver Street I did an SEM in preaching. This involved preaching three sermons and meeting with a congregational response group after each one to reflect on, affirm and evaluate various aspects of the sermon. Most Mennonite churches in Elkhart-Goshen are willing to have seminary students do SEMs in their congregations.

Apart from the academically related involvement, I was also able to be involved through worship leading and occasionally doing worship music and the children's story. I feel I have been greatly helped in establishing and developing a ministering identity through limited visitation with church members, committee involvement, trying to work with the pastor, Vyron Schmidt, in developing pastoral skills and getting exposure to the work of a pastor.

While my involvement has not been as extensive as I would like it to be (because of other responsibilities of seminary life), Jan and I feel it has been a blessing and a valuable growing and learning experience to be congregationally involved as well as academically involved during our years at seminary. Both the classroom and the congregation are helping to prepare us for ministry.

*Pat McFarren is a senior student at Mennonite Biblical Seminary and a member of the Salem Church at Kidron, Ohio. With him is his wife, Jan.*

**J. Winfield Fretz,** retired professor of sociology, was the featured speaker for the annual pre-Easter services at West Swamp Mennonite Church, Quakertown, Pa., April 8-11, on the theme "Sociological Themes from the Bible." His messages were "The Bible: My Favorite Sociology Textbook," "Family Living by Biblical Norms," "Choosing our Work by Biblical Guidelines" and "Biblical Base for Christian Community."

**The Great Plains Seminary Education Program** will offer the course "Evangelism and Church Planting" on Friday evenings and Saturdays, June 8-9, 15-16, 22-23 and 29-30. It will meet in Goerz Hall on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kan., and will be taught by GPSEP director Leland Harder. The fall course, "The Message of the Prophets," will be taught by Ronald Guengerich, instructor in Old Testament at Hesston (Kan.) College, and will meet at the Whitestone Church in Hesston on Monday evenings, Sept. 10 - Dec. 17. The January 1985 course, "How to Study the Bible," will be taught by Howard Charles.

# NEWS

## AIMM handbook to deal with objectives, policies

Waterloo, Ont.—At its semiannual meetings here March 23-25 the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission board adopted the first draft of a handbook outlining AIMM's approach to mission, basic objectives, missionary team policies and guidelines for crisis situations. The 70-page document will be tested with missionary staff over the next six months.

The revised version of the handbook, to be studied by the board at its next meeting, Oct. 18-21 in Fort Wayne, Ind., is to contain a preamble acknowledging that each of AIMM's five constituent groups has its own Statement of Faith. A statement on "Our Understanding of Christian Mission" will therefore be the starting point for policy making within the handbook.

Drafted by AIMM executive secretary James Bertsche, the handbook is exhaustive in its scope, dealing with general statements of objectives and philosophy as well as specific matters like missionary outfitting and lifestyle. The booklet lists the agency's major objectives in Africa as evangelism and church planting, church leadership training, nurture of believers, ministries of reconciliation and service ministries.

Although review of the handbook took a significant block of time at the meetings, the mission board acted on a host of other matters related to its work in Upper Volta, Zaire, Botswana, Lesotho and the Transkei, and the agency's North American headquarters.

Among these was approval for the purchase of an IBM XT computer system for the Elkhart, Ind., office at a cost of approximately $12,000. Smaller sums of money were set aside for vehicle purchases in Bandundu and Kinshasa, Zaire, typesetting equipment in Kananga, Zaire, and a revolving fund for bookstore inventory in Upper Volta. A $1,000 grant was approved toward the publication of a French-language manuscript on African church history written by Peter Falk.

Rising health insurance costs prompted the board to discuss the possibility of self-insuring its staff and missionaries rather than continuing to pay escalating premiums. A special subcommittee was formed to look into health and life insurance options and report to the fall meeting.

During other sessions, missionaries Jim and Vicki Egli and Dan and Kathy Petersen spoke about their past work and projections for the future. The Eglis completed a term in Lesotho, where they were involved in teaching at Bible conferences, and have now carried the same assignment to the Transkei. They reported that a feeling of ownership is developing among Transkeians for the program and expressed the desire for better connections to other missionary team members.

**Africa**

The Petersens led the board and visitors in a mock Jula lesson, effectively demonstrating the challenges and frustrations faced by linguistics workers in Upper Volta in reducing tribal languages to writing. They asked for prayer for their colleagues there, who daily work at this painstaking process, and for themselves, as they soon will face the task of choosing one of seven possible sites for relocation and the learning of yet another tribal language and culture.

While Mennonite World Conference will provide the setting for at least two consultations on Africa missions this summer in Strasbourg, France, several AIMM board and staff members are planning additional administrative trips to Africa later in the year, one during the month of August and the other during November/December.

Accepted for service by the AIMM board at these meetings were Evelyn Riediger, Vancouver, assigned to Upper Volta; Steve and Judy Harder, Newton, Kan., to either Upper Volta or Zaire; Harris and Christine Waltner, Mountain Lake, Minn., to Lesotho; and Steve and Pat Nelson, Fort Wayne, Ind., to Zaire.

AIMM is a cooperative venture of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church, Evangelical Mennonite Church, Evangelical Mennonite Conference and the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren. *Larry Cornies*

**The Urban Life Center** in Chicago has developed urban exposure programs for youth and high school groups. These experiences combine serious learning with fun to give participants a chance to test their own interests in the context of the city. The Urban Life Center is an independent organization founded in the late '60s to facilitate the exposure of students to the problems of racism, violence and urban neglect. Costs include $5 per night per person for lodging and $10 per person per day to arrange the program. For more information write: Gene Stoltzfus/Sally Bowers, Urban Life Center, 5004 S. Blackstone, Chicago, IL 60615, (312) 285-6059.

**The Trimtab Factor:** *How Business Executives Can Help Solve the Nuclear Weapons Crisis* is a how-to book for fellow executives interested in ending the arms race, written by Harold Willens, a 68-year-old California factory equipment entrepreneur. The former Marine Corps intelligence officer first became involved in peace politics in 1967. He said he took the book's title from the tiny rudder used to steer large ships—by exerting a small amount of pressure on the trimtab, one person can turn the ship, and Willens thinks business is the trimtab of America.

**Older people** may be doing their minds a favor by walking, assert two physicians at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Salt Lake City. Brisk walking not only helps older people maintain pep and stamina but sharpens their minds as well, say Robert Ruhling and Robert Dustman. The key, according to the doctors, is the increased flow of oxygen to the brain.

# Indian churches undertake school kit project for Kampuchea

Calcutta (MCC)—Stewardship and service were themes of the March 10-12 annual consultation of the six Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conferences in India and Mennonite Central Committee India. About 70 people participated.

Representatives of the six conferences, which make up the Mennonite Christian Service Fellowship of India (MCSFI), met to report on their conference activities. The overall theme of the conference was stewardship, and the group laid plans to carry out more service activities.

Mary Krehbiel, MCC worker in India, presented the need for school supplies in Kampuchea as one stewardship opportunity. Conference leaders responded by agreeing to produce over 10,000 kits by the end of May.

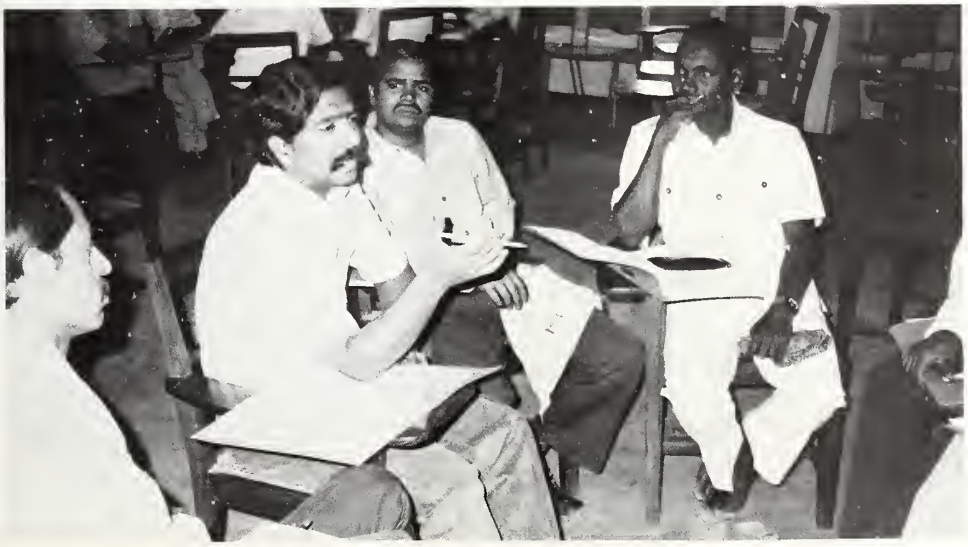
This is not MCSFI's first project for Kampuchea. MCSFI executive director R. S. Lemuel reported that MCSFI sent two medical workers to a short-term MCC assignment in Kampuchea. The two are physician Jacob Das and nurse Kamlesh Saimon.

The MCC/MCSFI cooperation goes back over 20 years. In 1962 MCC placed its first full-time India director in Calcutta. In 1963, through the encouragement of MCC, the association that is now MCSFI was formed. During many of the first 20 years cooperation between MCC and MCSFI took place in response to specific needs such as disaster responses or refugee relief.

In recent years the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches have formed development societies, and consultation and cooperation with MCC has been more regular. During the past year the MCSFI constituent conference began a systematic program of teaching about social service and fund raising for relief and development projects. They are collecting contributions of 20 paise (2¢ U.S.) per month to give people a sense of participation in meeting the needs of others.

P. J. Malagar, director of MCSFI from 1963 to 1981, is optimistic about these recent trends. "This is the first time we are starting to own this organization," he said. "These projects can take shape in the congregation, whether in a big or small way. Stewardship is a good start."

*Peter Elias, Mennonite Brethren, discussing with group at MCSFI consultation in Calcutta*




**Remember Our Leaders**
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## Director needed

**Friendship Circle Day Care Center**, a project of First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb., is seeking a director for an established center, maximum 22 children. This person must have a positive interest in children, a knowledge of child development, skills in administrative planning and leadership, and teaching capabilities. The center has high standards for maintaining a creative, caring atmosphere to help children grow to their fullest potential developmentally, emotionally and socially.

Position opens **June 1, 1984**.

For application write:
Janice Sutter, pastor
7300 Holdrege St.
Lincoln, NE 68505.

**A recent survey** of *Gospel Herald* subscribers concluded that young people have much less interest in "mission" than middle-aged and older people. "There is *major* slippage in mission interest from old to young people," concluded the report, an evaluation of *Sent* magazine. "It is a serious problem that by its very nature gets worse with each passing year."

**Washington (EPS)**—Representatives of 12 church resettlement agencies have begun a drive to give legal-resident status to about 150,000 Cuban and Haitian refugees in the United States. The U.S. administration has suggested plans to give such status only to the Cubans. Signing a letter on the "boat people" were, among others, representatives of Church World Service, U.S. Catholic Conference, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, and Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief of the Episcopal Church.

**Wheat, towels and layettes** were only three of the commodities making up the 57.5 million pounds of material aid Mennonite Central Committee sent to 36 countries in 1983. This was by far the largest quantity of material aid shipped by MCC in any one year. The average amount shipped yearly in the past 10 years is only 14.9 million pounds. Of the 57.5 million pounds of aid MCC sent, 56.7 million pounds was of food aid—mostly grains, milk powder, oil and beef; 53 million pounds was wheat, most of which came from Mennonite farmers in Canada.

## Health care: part of celebrating the Christian hope

Kansas City, Mo. (Meetinghouse)—Over 275 people involved in various aspects of health care gathered for the annual Mennonite Health Association meetings here March 23-28. The theme was "Celebrating Hope."

Since its founding in 1979, MHA has met in conjunction with the Protestant Health and Welfare Assembly (combined attendance of over 2,000) to examine the meaning of Christian health and healing.

Erland Waltner, MHA president, said that hope is a desire combined with expectation and action to realize that expectation. In the Bible this is reflected by the promises of God, which are then fulfilled.

Christians still have hope because there are God-promises which we can actively wait for. Part of our active waiting includes working toward wholistic living—healing or caring for body, soul, mind and emotions, he said.

Harold Schultz, president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., referred to the "difficult times" in which we live. For the first time in the history of Gallup polls, those under age 30 are more pessimistic about a future on this planet than are those of the older generation. Covers of magazines like *Newsweek* and *Psychology Today* speak of nuclear jitters and a fear among children that they will never grow up. Suicide is the fastest growing killer among youth.

In light of these and other "difficult" signs, Schultz challenged all arms of the MHA to seriously address two questions: "What is your mission—your reason for being?" and "Who do you serve?" Responses to these questions can generate new hope in competence, commitment and compassion.

Ronald Ropp, director of the Mennonite Hospital Association's Illinois Pastoral Services Institute, Bloomington, Ill., presented challenges at several occasions for a new vision within congregations to serve the total person.

*Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging executive (left to right): Martha Graber, Barbara Reber, Carl Good*

As the list of opportunities grew longer, Ropp told an anecdote which stayed with the rest of the conference. A

## Japanese churches debate pastoral leadership, evangelism

Miyazaki, Japan (GCMC)—The Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference held its annual meeting Feb. 10-12 in Miyazaki. In attendance were 27 delegates and 10 observers from 15 member congregations. Burton and Elnore Yost, who had just completed a teaching assignment in Korea, also attended.

Two main issues were discussed at this conference. One dealt with the subject of pastoral leadership. What is the role of the pastor in the community and in the local church? It is important that the pastor and lay leaders cooperate, conferees agreed. One person felt that, "rather than talk about professional versus non-professional pastoral leadership or full-time versus part-time pastoral leadership, wouldn't it be well to look at the model of the suffering servant?"

The other issue discussed concerned evangelistic outreach and new church planting. Concern was expressed that it is difficult to have fellowship when members are separated by long distances.

"We must form many fellowship groups in different places as we face the 21st century," said one delegate. When new work is begun, the area should be limited so that there is the possibility of fellowship, they concluded.

The conference and the churches are self-supporting. A budget of $15,300 was accepted for 1984.

In addition, the Miyakonojo bookstore property was sold for approximately $65,000. Two-thirds of this amount will be placed into a newly established evangelism fund.

*Miyazaki pastor Hiroshi Yanada (center) at the Japan Mennonite Christian Church Conference*

**Cyclone Domoina** swept through the southern provinces of Mozambique in early February, unleashing its fury on an already fragile situation. The country is already swamped with the task of trying to save 4 million people suffering from the country's worst drought in history, and relief efforts are now hampered by washed-out roads and rail lines, according to Jim Shenk, Mennonite Central Committee worker in Mozambique.

**At the National Association of Evangelicals** convention, held March 6-8 in Columbus, Ohio, Samuel Brubaker of the Brethren in Christ Church, noting that the $250,000 which NAE's World Relief had requested to address the famine in Africa would only meet the needs of about .03 percent of those facing starvation, moved that the NAE petition President Reagan and Congress to "cancel the production of one Trident submarine, one B-1 bomber, one Minuteman, one Pershing and one cruise missile and make available the funds thus saved to various relief agencies as needed. . . ." The motion was voted down.

**Condemned to death in U.S. prisons** are 1,296 men, 13 women—667 whites, 555 blacks, 66 Hispanics, 12 Native Americans, seven Asians and two people of unknown origin. Twelve states do not have a death penalty. Since 1608 there have been 14,101 confirmed executions in the United States. To date, New York has had the most executions—1,100. Wisconsin has had only one.

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pastor instructed his secretary, "Please go over my sermon notes. Each time you see 'horrible rat race,' replace that with 'glorious challenge.' " For already overorganized congregations and overburdened pastors, the current emphasis on wellness/wholistic care may seem like one more activity on a hopeless treadmill. Or it can be regarded as an opportunity to have the total congregational ministries come together as a total ministry for whole people.

Paul Umbeck, pastor of 30 years and now chairman of Evangelical Health Systems, Oak Brook, Ill., addressed the church's role in providing hope. He warned that in too many cases the different church programs have taken on a life of their own and don't necessarily fit a wholistic ministry.

One of the greatest "glorious challenges" in the church is to motivate congregations to examine their total mission and to reformulate it in terms of programs that include all age groups, all needs of people and all the resources of the Spirit promised to us in the Bible. To do this, said Umbeck, we need to emphasize a strong spirit of volunteerism among all believers.

At the annual MHA business meeting, executive director H. Ernest Bennett reported a continuing growth in membership. Mennonite Child Care Association applied for membership. The goal for 1984 is to enroll 850 members; 728 are already on the roll. Menno-search, a job-placement and referral service, now has a roster of close to 10,000 Mennonite health-care workers. Mennonite Disaster Service officially volunteered its cooperation with MHA institutions in the event of disasters. Erland Waltner passed the president's gavel on to Ron Litwiller.

Plans are to meet again March 1-6, 1985, in Boston on the theme of health stewardship. *Bernie Wiebe*


# *WHOLISTIC MINISTRY*

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— *"Wholistic Ministries - Inestimable Worth."*
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**Other Topics**

**Dr. Clyde Lansdell,** D. Psych., Specializes in Work with the mentally retarded.

— *"Emotional Wholeness"*
— *"Social Wholeness"*

The Conference will include Workshops for Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) and Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly (CMHA), a Banquet and Informal Fellowship Time.

**Registration:** — Conference including meals $100.00 per person.

**For further Information / Registration contact:**

K. Froese, 171 Donwood Dr.
Winnipeg, Man. R2G 0V9 (204) 668-4410

**Calvary Mennonite Church** of Liberal, Kan., celebrated its 25th anniversary April 7-8. The original charter of the congregation was signed on April 12, 1959. A homecoming supper was held the evening of April 7, and slides were shown depicting the history of the church. A special worship service the next day included former pastors.

**"Form 1040 is the place where the Pentagon** enters all our lives and asks unthinking cooperation with the idol of nuclear destruction. I think the teaching of Jesus tells us to render to a nuclear-armed Caesar what that Caesar deserves: tax resistance." These are the words of Seattle Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen (right), who two years ago decided to withhold half of his federal income tax and thereby helped launch a religious "war tax" resistance movement that is growing rapidly. According to the Internal Revenue Service, war tax resistance has increased nearly fivefold in the last three years. War tax resistance groups say that actual numbers are higher, that IRS tabulations miss many people, including those who simply don't file or who don't specify reasons for underpaying.

# Evangelism, unity are concerns of South American churches

Newton, Kan.—Church growth in the cities, leadership crisis in the rural churches, concern for evangelism on the local and international levels, wholistic ministries and unity amid diversity—all these greeted Glendon Klaassen and Larry Tschetter on an administrative trip to South America.

Klaassen, Commission on Overseas Mission secretary for Latin America, and Tschetter, a commission member from Freeman, S.D., recently visited all the COM missionaries in Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil.

Meeting with 25 church groups and committees "gave us a grass-roots feeling of what is happening and what the issues are," Klaassen said.

An example of urban church growth is the Mennonite church in Ceilandia (formerly Taguatinga), Brazil. Less than three years ago Klaassen reported he was there for the "first baptism in the missionary career of Gary and Ellie Loewen. Now that first baptismal candidate has been installed as pastor of that growing congregation."

Another example of urban church growth is the Ibagué church in Bogota, Colombia. "It was rewarding to see this church," Klaassen said. Beginning as a Bible study group in the Klaassen home while they were missionaries, the congregation now has a large modern facility.

In his report, Tschetter noted that rural churches struggle because potential leaders leave the rural areas for education and jobs in the cities. "Many times those who remain are the shy, timid, illiterate and those who are followers rather than leaders. Where does that leave the rural Mennonite church? In most cases, it continues to have dedicated members who have spiritual gifts of various kinds, but usually the gift of leadership and pastoring is not present."

Evangelistic outreach was a concern expressed by leaders in all the countries. In Colombia, Paraguay and Brazil, the COM representatives found leaders interested in extending evangelism beyond the boundaries of their countries even though they continue to request personnel from North America to participate in their own local projects. For example, Brazil is interested in responding to the request for Mennonite mission outreach in Portugal.

"A uniqueness of Mennonites in their mission efforts is their ministry to the whole person, whatever the need may be," says Klaassen. Visiting Recife, Brazil, where COM missionaries Dan and Rose Waltner Graber are working, he says that the Grabers hold Sunday school, youth meetings and worship services while seeking to provide social services along with MCC volunteers in that area affected by drought and poverty.

South American Mennonites have a growing feeling of "family" with the Mennonites in other parts of the world. Colombians expressed their desire for "better communications concerning decisions and pronouncements made by other Mennonite groups, especially of Canadian and U.S. conferences."

Unity amid diversity was experienced firsthand by Klaassen and Tschetter as they worshiped on Sunday in an Indian church in the Paraguayan Chaco. Five languages were being spoken by people of four cultural backgrounds. "What a joyful experience to realize how God's love encompasses total humanity and that we are all brothers and sisters in his eyes," Tschetter said of that experience. *Angela Rempel*

## *Latin American Mennonite Congress meets in Brazil*

Newton, Kan.—Studying the subject of how to live as Mennonite Christians in the realities of Latin America, people from six countries met Jan. 26-28 for the Second Latin American Mennonite Congress (Southern Cone).

*Intercambio Menonita*, a publication of the Brazilian Mennonites, reported that 77 people from Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil participated in the congress held at Palmeira, Parana, Brazil.

"Should the church be the conscience of the state?" asked Ernesto Weichselberger (Paraguay) as he spoke about the New Testament church and the state. Discussions, at times quite spirited, followed the presentations by the three main speakers.

Victor Arndt (Brazil) addressed the subject of which New Testament concepts are to be followed by the church today and which were applicable only in the first century.

Raul Garcia (Argentina) said that to be true peacemakers people must have communion with God. Pacifism was one of six Anabaptist themes he presented. He asked thought-provoking questions such as "Who determines what is Caesar's and what is God's?"

Although missionaries from North America participated, Latin Americans planned and led the congress. Mennonite Board of Missions missionary Otis Hochstetler wrote, "There was . . . good exchange on Anabaptist issues. It seemed to me to be much easier to talk about these kinds of issues coming from other Latins, rather than from the missionary."

"The use of Spanish and Portuguese did not cause confusion. On the contrary, everyone marveled at the spirit of unity," observed a Brazilian participant.

The next congress is scheduled for January 1986 in Uruguay. *Angela Rempel*

**There have been about 200 wars** since 1941, according to an article by John Gellner, editor of *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, in the Jan. 5 *Globe and Mail*. Gellner notes that the "eyes of Western peace activists are riveted on the kind of war that has not occurred: nuclear war. The tendency is to dismiss those (conflicts) in progress as 'small wars.' " They are anything but that, he says—the Iran-Iraq war has claimed about 400,000 lives in just over three years. He also notes that the African wars have ruined countries such as Chad, Ethiopia and Somalia, and are ruining Angola.

## Trail of the Martyrs

A 64-page pocket-sized guide to the Anabaptist martyrs, with descriptions of occupations and executions. Arranged alphabetically by country and town with distances and directions from major cities for World Conference touring.

Send $2 (U.S.) or $2.40 (Canadian) to:
Lynn Miller
3003 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46517.

## Pastor required

**Summer 1984**

For more details contact:
Vineland United Mennonite Church
c/o John Friesen
Chairman, Search Committee
10 Wedgewood Court
St. Catharines, ON I2N 6I6
Phone (416) 935-0767.

## Pastor needed

A full-time pastor needed at **Home Street Mennonite Church**, Winnipeg.

Starting time: prefer **Sept. 1, 1984**, but will discuss

For more details write to:
Abe Friesen
346 Nightingale Road
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3G5.

## Needed

**Administrator** is needed for an 87-bed, church-related adult-care home, a 12-apartment, low-cost housing unit and plans for the development of a retirement center.

Send resume to:
Menno Loepp
Inman, KS 67546.

**A director of health services** is needed in an 87-bed, church-related adult-care home.

Send resume to:
Menno Loepp
Inman, KS 67546.

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## New Bible Survey Course

A unique educational tool will be available for use by September 1984. *Discovery* is a 35-session Bible survey course with several goals: (1) to provide a historical framework of the Bible, (2) to give basic Bible information including knowledge of biblical geography, (3) to contextualize the biblical literature (for what situation was this written?), (4) to provide information about how the Bible came to be, and (5) to encourage the reading of large portions of the Bible.

This course is designed for self-study by individuals who then meet together as a group. It will be most rewarding for those who are willing to do a substantial amount of work outside the group time. A certificate will be awarded to those who complete the course.

## Meet Elizabeth Yoder,

General Editor for COE. As General Editor Elizabeth is responsible for editorial oversight of all COE/Faith and Life Press publications, including curriculum, trade books, and a variety of other projects. Elizabeth is editor of Christian Educational Resource Index (CERI) and Church Bulletin Service (CBS). She also serves as associate editor for *Builder* magazine and on the editorial team of Foundation Series for youth and adults. Elizabeth began her work for COE in 1977.

## COE Calendar

**May**
4-6 Marriage Encounter, Meadville, PA

**September**
1 Bible Survey Course ready for use.
2 Use of Revised Foundation Series material for children begins (order in June).

## Also Coming Soon:

*Creative Family Worship* by Palmer and Ardys Becker is a helpful discussion of ways that a family can worship together with the heart, soul, mind, and strength.

*Time Will Tell* by James Juhnke and Harold Moyer. This cantata for mixed chorus, piano, flute, and string bass or guitar is based on the Book of Acts.

*Working with Youth on Issues of Sexuality* by Lois Paff Bergen, Hilda Enns, and Sue Goerzen. This manual for teachers of youth gives resources for study and discussion of eight topics. Each section includes ideas for involving parents.

*Preparation for Marriage* by Lois Paff Bergen, Sue Goerzen, and Fred Unruh. The authors give a rationale for marriage preparation and share some of the models and materials developed by persons within the church who are helping couples prepare for marriage.

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

**The Mennonite Library and Archives** at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., has published a guide to its art collection. The book contains a page for each of the nearly 500 items in the permanent art collection of the library. Most of the works in the collection are by Mennonite artists, dating from the early 17th century to the present. Copies of the book are available at the library for $25 each.

**The Methodist minister** who directs the (Korean) Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development, Cho Seung Kyuk, and two academics, Lee Young Hee and Kang Man Kil, were arrested Dec. 30, 1983, and charged with praising a North Korean proposal for national unification as more reasonable and democratic than the South Korean approach. Expressing such opinions violates South Korea's National Security Law. A purpose of the institute is to "foster reflection, discussion and development of democratic foundations in Korea."

**"Tens of thousands"** of destitute families and single people are wandering the streets without work and without homes, according to a survey of major Canadian cities by Toronto's *Globe and Mail*. They are not only the "perennial vagrants and street alcoholics." They include university graduates. They go to the hostels, missions, emergency shelters and soup kitchens. Vancouver attracts transients with its warmer climate, but the provincial government spends over $100,000 per year sending back those willing to go. Still, city officials say that 6,000 to 8,000 in the city core are in need of regular aid.

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# MINISTERS

*Herb Dalke* has resigned as pastor of Boynton Church, Hopedale, Ill., effective Aug. 1.

*Menno Epp*, pastor of Foothills Church, Calgary, will become pastor of Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church in August.

*Rosie Epp*, co-pastor of Southern Hills Church, Topeka, Kan., began serving as half-time interim pastor of Manhattan (Kan.) Fellowship in mid-February.

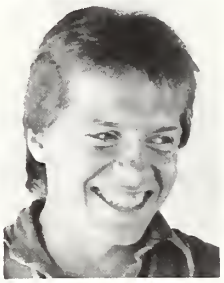
*Nevin Miller* has begun serving as interim pastor of Carlock (Ill.) Church and North Danvers Church, Danvers, Ill.

*Gerhard Peters* has resigned as pastor of Bergthal Church, Pawnee Rock, Kan., effective Oct. 7.

# WORKERS

*Beckers*

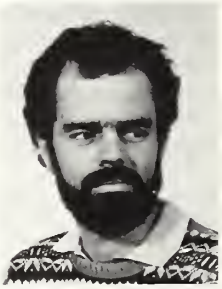
*Roths*



*A. Reimer*

*H. Reimer*

*Schrag*



*Sider*

*Edwin* and *Arletta Becker*, First Church, Aberdeen, Idaho, have been appointed by Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., to a one-year term in Japan as hosts at Japan Anabaptist Center, a guesthouse and study center in Tokyo.

*Herman Bontrager* was appointed new coordinator of the Mennonite Mental Health Services program in Paraguay March 1. He will work out of Akron, Pa., continuing his MCC assignment as secretary for South America and the Caribbean.

*Stanley R. Clemens* has been appointed professor of mathematics at Bluffton (Ohio) College, beginning this fall. He replaces *Luther Shetler*, who retires this year.

*Eunice Culp*, manager of records department, began half time as personnel services coordinator at Mennonite Mutual Aid on Feb. 1.

*Harold F. Miller* has been appointed reconciliation and food resource person for the MCC Africa program.

*Ray Miller* became accounting operations manager at Mennonite Mutual Aid Feb. 1.

*Albert Reimer*, Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Clearbrook, B.C., began a two-year MVS term Aug. 22, 1983, in youth work at Fresno (Calif.) Boys Club. He has a bachelor's degree from Seattle Pacific University. His parents are Nick and Erna Reimer of Clearbrook.

*Henry Reimer*, Olivet Church, Clearbrook, B.C., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 15, 1983, at Welcome Inn Friendship Center in Hamilton, Ont. He has a bachelor's degree from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. His parents are Vernon and Helen Reimer of Clearbrook.

*Earl* and *Ruth Roth*, Emmanuel Church, Salem, Ore., and First Church, Paso Robles, Calif., respectively, missionaries under the Commission on Overseas Mission and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission in Zaire since 1954, returned to that country Jan. 13 to begin a new term of service in urban evangelism and support ministries in Kinshasa.

*Leona Schrag*, First Church, Pretty Prairie, Kan., a COM/AIMM missionary since 1968, left for Zaire Jan.13. She has begun a new term of service as coordinator of the Christian education and literature program of the Mennonite Church of Zaire.

**A secret cable** prepared by the U.S. consulate in South Africa states that U.S. citizens own 57 percent of all foreign-held shares of stock listed on the Johannesburg exchange. In the past, the U.S. State Department has suggested that U.S. financial involvement in South Africa came to only about $2.6 billion. Consular reports indicate, however, that the figure is much higher—about $14.6 billion. "All of this suggests," concluded the cable, "that the potential for U.S. disinvestment could be more important to the South African economy than we had previously assumed." (*Jack Anderson*)

**Two Idaho nuns** received light sentences and high praise from a judge after pleading guilty to charges of criminal trespass while trying to stop the "white train" Feb. 24. "Your motives are beyond reproach," said Judge Alfred Perry, who gave two Dominican sisters $25 suspended fines and six months unsupervised probation for their protest. More than 40 people were arrested that day for trying to stop the train, which they believe was carrying nuclear warheads. The train was en route from the Pantex warhead assembly plant in Amarillo, Texas, to the Bangor (Wash.) Trident Submarine base.

**The famine that now threatens** more countries than at any time in recent history is the result of faltering food production combined with rapid population growth, according to a new study by Worldwatch Institute, a Washington-based research group. Short-term relief may avert the drought-induced famine this year, but improving long-term food security will require that these basic underlying causes of hunger be addressed, the study found.

# RECORd

*H. Sprunger*

*J. Sprunger*

*Sweeney*

*West*

*Whitt*

*Wiens*

*Willms*

*Yoder*

*Peter* and *Jan Bender Shetler*, First Church, Bluffton, Ohio, have begun three-year MCC terms in Kinkuni, Angola. Jan will work in community development, and Peter will be an agriculture extentionist. They have just completed MCC assignments in Ethiopia. She has a bachelor's degree in social studies education and history from Goshen (Ind.) College. He has a bachelor's degree in plant science from Utah State University, Logan. Their parents are Luther and Geneva Shetler of Bluffton and John M. and Naomi H. Bender of Ogden, Utah.

*Jerry Short* became controller for Mennonite Mutual Aid Feb. 1.

*Rich Sider* has assumed dual responsibilities as MCC secretary for Central America and as director of personnel development.

*Hugh* and *Janet Sprunger*, First Church, Berne, Ind., COM missionaries in Taiwan from 1954-1980 and in Hong Kong since 1980, left March 8 to begin another term of service in Hong Kong, where they will work among low-income factory workers.

*Diane Stauffer*, First Church, Berne, Ind., has begun a three-year MCC assignment as a registered nurse at Hospital Albert Schweitzer in Deshcapelles, Haiti. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing from Goshen (Ind.) College. Her parents are Frederick and Claudette Stauffer of Berne.

*Edward Stucky*, First Church, Berne, Ind., has joined the staff of Mennonite Foundation, Goshen, Ind., as an area representative.

*Meg Sweeney*, First Christian Assembly of God, Cincinnati, began a one-year MVS term Oct. 10, 1983, as a child-care worker at Friendship Day-Care Center in Hutchinson, Kan. Her parents are Patty and Dennis Sweeney of Cincinnati.

*Jeff West*, University Baptist Church, Seattle, began a two-year MVS term Sept. 1, 1983, at the Downtown Emergency Service Center in Seattle. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, Seattle. His parents are John T. and Ruth B. West of LaGrange, Ga.

*Maralu Whitt*, First Baptist Church, Deposit, N.Y., began a two-year MVS term Sept. 15, 1983, as a child-care worker at Mennonite Community Day Care in Markham, Ill. She has a bachelor's degree from Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. Her mother is Georgia Lavelle of Tampa, Fla.

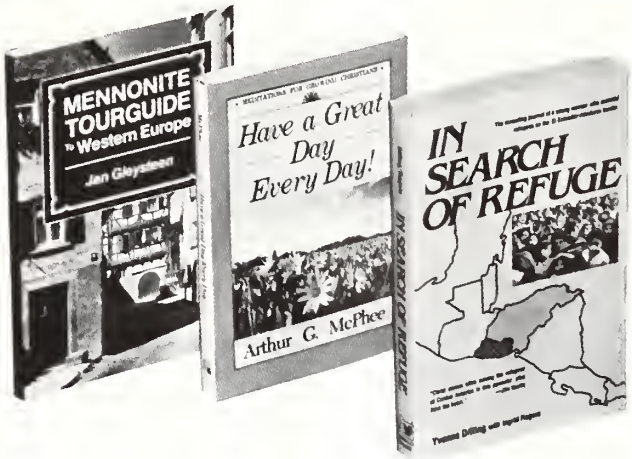
*Cindy Wiens*, First Baptist Church, Ness City, Kan., began a two-year MVS term Aug. 23, 1983, as trekking coordinator at Home of Neighborly Services in Denver. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas, Lawrence. He parents are Lenora and the late Peter K. Wiens.

*Helen Willms*, Coaldale (Alta.) Church, returned to Taiwan Jan. 23 for a new term of service as a community health nurse and consultant, relating to Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hwalien. She has served under COM in Taiwan since 1957.

*Lori Yoder*, North Danvers Church, Danvers, Ill., began a two-year MVS term as a social worker at Edgewood Children's Center in St. Louis. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana. Her parents are Wallace and Betty Yoder of Bloomington, Ill.

# HERALD PRESS: High Quality Books with a Distinct Concern for Integrity, Simplicity, Peace

## For Growing Adults




**Mennonite Tourguide to Western Europe**
**by Jan Gleysteen**
Here is an introduction to nine West European countries with information of geographical, historical, sociological and cultural interest, as well as practical information on climate, traffic rules, currency, holidays, passports, baggage, and much more. Each introduction to a country is followed by detailed regional itineraries and local walking tours with emphasis on points of interest to the Mennonite traveler. 115 photos, 18 charts, 16 maps.
Paper $12.95, in Canada $15.55

**Maintaining the Right Fellowship**
**by John L. Ruth**
Rich in stories and anecdotes, this book begins with the European ancestors of eastern Pennsylvania Mennonites at the end of the Thirty Years' War (1648), follows the immigrants to Pennsylvania (1683-1773), and surveys the building up of the community. The important division of 1847 is narrated in considerable detail. From this point on, the life of both Franconia and Eastern District Conferences is narrated in paralleled fashion up to the year 1947. Illustrated by more than 80 photographs, drawings, and maps.
Hard $24.95, in Canada $29.95

**Some People Are Throwing You Into Confusion**
**by Pierre Widmer**
The author writes in a time of doctrinal confusion and moral relaxation within worldwide Christianity. He identifies numerous religious currents disturbing our lives as individual Christians and as corporate churches. He says we must neither allow ourselves to be unduly troubled nor pretend to be the only ones who hold the truth. This study begins with the New Testament and reflects the author's understandings as a long time Anabaptist Christian. Volume 14 in the Mennonite Faith Series.
Paper $1.50, in Canada $1.80

**What We Believe About Children**
**by Marvin K. Yoder**
Are children responsible for sin during their childhood . . . for sins of their ancestors? Are children included in Christ's saving work? The author addresses these and other important questions about children and Christian faith. He presents seasoned insights on the scriptural teaching concerning the place of children in God's kingdom and lays a firm foundation for belief and action. Children belong to God and they participate in his reign, the author states. Volume 13 in the Mennonite Faith Series.
Paper $1.50, in Canada $1.80

**Have A Great Day Every Day!**
**by Arthur G. McPhee**
Daily meditations for the growing Christian. For 56 days you begin the day with study and conversation with God and end the day with reflection and prayer. Through the eight weeks you will learn to handle handicaps, get your priorities in order, cultivate friendships, use your time wisely, and get to know God better through developing good habits. From the author of *Friendship Evangelism* and *Traveling Light* (Zondervan).
Paper $6.50, in Canada $7.80

**In Search of Refuge**
**by Yvonne Dilling and Ingrid Rogers**
The revealing journal of a young woman who assisted refugees on the El Salvador-Honduras border. 'Yvonne's deep compassion for the refugees pervades the book . . . her faith and strength and willingness to risk even her own life for the sake of the gospel and the people she grew to love stand as a moving testimony." —Jim Wallis in the preface. Illustrated with photographs by Mike Goldwater.
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**Big Questions**
**by Richard A. Kauffman**
How can I cope with failure? Does belief in God make sense? Why do some people suffer? Why am I tempted? Does God have a plan for my life? And do miracles really happen? Here is a discussion of these difficult questions for youth from a thoughtful, Christian viewpoint. An excellent graduation gift or discussion starter for any youth group.
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**At your local bookstore. For a complete catalog write:**

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**Dept. MEN**
Scottdale, PA 15683
Kitchener, ON N2G 4M5


## Teacher needed

**United Mennonite Educational Institute**, Leamington, Ont., invites applications for a teacher with major responsibilities in the area of physical and health education, beginning September 1984.

For application forms write to:
Erwin Tiessen, principal
United Mennonite Educational Institute
Route 5
Leamington, ON N8H 3V8
(519) 326-7448.

UMEI is a private Mennonite secondary school. Teachers who are in sympathy with the Christian and Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective and who agree to cooperate with tenets of its faith are encouraged to apply.

## Help wanted

**Head cook**, Camp Keola, Huntington Lake, Calif.

Needs to plan menus and supervise help to prepare food for up to 120 people.

Camp opens **June 18, 1984**, and closes after Labor Day weekend.

Call or write:
Nick Rogalsky
21732 E. Dinuba Ave.
Reedley, CA 93654
Phone (209) 638-2939.


***(Coming in August)***

***a new novel by Sara Stambaugh***

*I Hear the Reaper's Song*

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## Watch interpretation

I too believe it important to interpret the Bible in light of its historical context, so I respected the attention given to this generally by the presenters at Perspective '84. However, I was disappointed to hear that at points the appeal to the historical-critical method was set against those who in their ignorance insist on holding on to "antiquated ideas."

In one case the presenter was referring to the picture of Christ as "head" in Ephesians 5:21-33. It was suggested that many were guilty of "reading back" into this text with a Greek mindset. That is to say, Paul could not have thought about head as we think about head today (i.e. the site of the mind, the control center). Why? Well, if we had given attention to the historical context, we would have realized that for Paul the Hebrew, the control center was the heart, not the head.

For the Hebrew this would have been true. But this is not so here. Although trained at the feet of Gamaliel, Paul was a Roman citizen from Tarsus and doubtlessly familiar with Greek thought, as any reading in the Epistles will substantiate (e.g. Christ as the "image of the invisible God" is clearly a Platonic concept). The most obvious proof is to consider Paul's audience. Yes, there were probably Jews from the Diaspora in Ephesus, but the predominant mindset was *not* Hebrew but Greek.

This carelessness casts doubt on Paul's intent and how we are to view the passage today. If Paul did not mean head, why did he say head? Or is it that we are offended by Paul's admonitions concerning the family? Before we accuse Paul of chauvinism, we might do well to recall that in the society of Christ, the head is not the greatest but the least. Paul was simply echoing Jesus when he said, "The greatest among you will be your servant." *Gary F. Daught, 1510 Jefferson St., Duluth, MN 55812*

March 19

## About inerrancy

I wonder what people mean when they express concern that our leaders do not believe in the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Do they mean that there are no discrepancies in the Bible? That would puzzle me, because they seem obvious to me. For instance, in the Easter story according to Luke, Mary Magdalene went with the other women to the grave. According to John, Mary Magdalene was alone and it was to her alone that Jesus spoke. This does not seem important because all the Gospels agree that Jesus rose. In their excitement about this fact, each one told it the way he remembered it. The inerrant message is that Jesus lives.

It is more difficult in the Christmas stories. According to Luke, Mary and Joseph came to the temple after Mary's purification and from there they immediately went home to Nazareth. That leaves no room for the wise men and the flight to Egypt. Of course, the point is that the rich and the educated need also to bow at the manger.

If people honestly believe there are no discrepancies, it is not for me to judge. But can you also understand that some of us find it impossible to close our eyes to some of these facts? Maybe it takes just as big a faith to discern God's inerrant truths in spite of the discrepancies as it does to not see them. *Marie J. Janzen, 217 Muse #104, Newton, KS 67114*

March 20

## Brought Karaganda closer

I have just read your Jan. 17 "One Glimpse of the Russian Mennonite Story" and enjoyed it very much. In particular I appreciated the sensitive and sympathetic description of worship in Karaganda.

I have come to know members of the churches there and something about their story but am still waiting for the opportunity for direct fellowship with them in that city. Your description brings it a little closer. *Walter Sawatzky, MCC secretary for Europe, Langendorfer Strasse 29, 5450 Neuwied 1, West Germany*

March 26

## Two positions

### Editorial assistant

A half-time position to prepare news releases, copy for CMC inserts in the *Mennonite Reporter* and other CMC publications as required. The assignment may require some travel.
**Qualifications:** A keen interest in CMC work, theologically informed, writing ability.

### Resource Centre manager

A four-fifths-time position to manage the day-to-day operations of an educational Resource Centre that loans materials to congregations and schools. The assignment includes preparation of promotional materials and advising users in the selection of materials.

**Qualifications:** A keen interest in CMC work, theologically informed, interpersonal and organization skills.

**Starting dates:** August/September 1984.

Please apply in writing by June to:
Rudy A. Regehr
Congregational Resources Board
Conference of Mennonites in Canada
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.


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For more information about the IRA/ART, call 800-348-7468; or (219)533-9511, collect within Indiana.

Mennonite Mutual Aid

# Stewardship includes church buildings

*Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

It came upon me during a winter night drive through the streets of Wichita: all those empty churches. Huge, dark, warm edifice after huge, dark, warm edifice.

Dismay, sorrow, a trace of horror—all these had been creeping up on me and suddenly there it was, focused. What a waste. I admit having what might be diagnosed as a "house church mentality": a building is for using, especially a church.

I knew those empty churches would be lighted and filled the following Sunday morning, probably Sunday evening and perhaps even Wednesday evening. On the other hand, I also knew by then the hard work house church members frequently have in making a structure double as living quarters and worship space, where members typically rub shoulders in other than their Sunday clothes and feelings.

My trek over the years led me to a fairly large "sanctuary" church in Nebraska where I was gratified to learn that a Vietnamese congregation met (separately by their choice) concurrently in Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings and that the same hall and four basement Sunday school rooms housed a day-care center during five 12-hour days of the week. The women who quilted one day a month in one corner of Fellowship Hall eventually gave in, gave up "their" space and moved upstairs rather than coexist with the din of 50 preschoolers. But, I submit, it was a useful conflict. The building is being used.

(My cousin's church in Chicago has a Coptic congregation sharing the building on Sunday morning—you can smell the incense upstairs—and a Seventh-Day Adventist group using it on Saturdays. Sharing the bulletin boards is tricky.)

My trek led to a part-time job teaching English as a second language through the local community college. You guessed it: classes are held in a church—First Presbyterian in downtown Lincoln. Tours around that labyrinthine structure provided lots of vocabulary for my students and, I dare say, a measure of soft-sell evangelism.

My trek has included being a guest presenter at a senior center here in Lincoln; folks 60 and up come for a contribution-basis lunch and about two hours of socializing or a program. Right again; it was in a church. Four of Lincoln's nine senior centers are in churches.

For worship I have now come full circle. In God's inimitable way of taking us from year to year, our family is worshiping with a small group of Friends (Quakers) in a "meetinghouse." The house—donated to the group years ago—is just now being readied for the Kim family, its new resident caretakers (who aren't necessarily part of the meeting and who live there for the cost of utilities). The front hall and living room are the common area. More doubling up comes in the kitchen during the once-a-month potluck. One cabinet in the back room houses the "meeting's" dishes and other equipment. During silent worship the young children are cared for in another small back room and there is a play area in the basement. It works.

While a house church mentality is right for me, I hastily register great gratitude for the likes of First Mennonite Church in Newton, Kan., which frequently hosts the Council of Commissions and other large groups. Given their ample facilities, I encourage such congregations to dream on. Can our buildings serve even more uses?

*Trinity (Episcopal) Church, New York*

Can the kitchen be used for preparation for meals to the frail elderly during the week?

Could an unused room be rented out or donated as office space to a worthy organization? (Here in Lincoln, Nebraskans for Peace is more or less permanently housed in a third-floor room of First Christian Church, a mutually beneficial arrangement.)

Could a section of an unused building be recycled into an emergency shelter? For transients? For abused spouses or children? Could one room be a pantry for emergency food distribution?

Could an urban church office staff during the week be increased to provide a "coffee-and-donuts" place for people who walk by? The United Methodist Church in Madison, Tenn., entertained "an angel unawares" in this manner. One Arthur Malof, who lived up the street, found his way to the coffee maker on an irregular basis and a relationship grew. Would the church, asked Malof one day, be his family? Sure, said the pastor. No one knew that this prompted Malof to make the church the beneficiary of his modest life insurance policy. The result? This past January, two years after Malof's accidental death and the church subsequently standing in as his family for funeral arrangements, the Malof Adult Day-Care Center opened its doors in a remodeled part of the church, a memorial to Arthur Malof.

Another congregation rented a basement room to a community "handyman service" which coordinated fix-it problems with people who needed employment. Sure enough, in due time, the congregation's bread came back on the water—and with butter and jam on it. The handyman service gave its skills to the remedying of the church's crumbling basement wall.

But even, or especially, with no foreseeable returns, I have lived long enough to be convinced that the stewardship of our space in churches brings, along with the challenges and necessary negotiations, joy. Try it.

*Muriel Thiessen Stackley, 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, NE 68516, is a part-time teacher and a free-lance writer. She wrote this article upon request from* The Mennonite.

# Seminary prepares us to go

*Leah Sonwani*

According to the great command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19, we do have a long tradition of sending missionaries to the different parts of the world. They have spread the Good News, baptized the people and established the churches of believers in the name of Jesus Christ.

Today those churches are becoming autonomous and indigenous. As a result of moratorium debates in the '70s and other factors, national church leaders, pastors and layworkers are studying in American seminaries to provide more effectual and dynamic leadership to the national churches. We have come to study the unending task of missions, to exchange theological views, to discuss the issues—theological, social and political—to be able to help the kingdom grow from a mustard seed to an enormous plant.

Mennonite Biblical Seminary is an intentional community where we recognize the presence of the students and faculty from the ethnic and other Mennonite churches, plus a global representation of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches. We are also an ecumenical society. Here we also recognize our common heritage of salvation and grace in Jesus Christ. And we recognize the common call for ministry either in a home church or a mission field, a secular setting or a religious community.

We recognize the need of ministering to each other by loving, caring for and supporting each other. We recognize the contribution of each one to our total learning and experiences of God's words and works among us either in a formal or informal gathering.

This is the first step in our preparation for future ministries. By acknowledging the global body of Jesus Christ, we accept his lordship overall. Some of our seminary studies are testing ground for our spiritual convictions. For some students seminary is a springboard for future ministries. Others review their visions and commitments to Christian ministry.

Students and faculty explore together the new dimensions of Christian discipleship and its agenda for home and the world at large. Peace, justice, liberation and the role of Christian community are some items. Constant efforts are made to define the issues and discuss them so that their message can go out to the world through the servants of God as they are willing to share and live that message in this turbulent world.

*'Our task is not to be satisfied with our own achievements of personal salvation and grace but to help others receive it and see a new order of justice.'*

A good emphasis is laid upon witnessing through social actions and witnessing by being a model community. It reminds us that the entire world is looking to Christianity for spiritual, moral and ethical guidance, whether we are aware of it or not. Jesus said, "The city situated on the top of the hill cannot be hidden." In other words, the seminary is leaving imprints on the lives of individuals, congregations and even in secular communities by its social actions and biblical convictions.

Subconsciously I ask a question of myself. Am I giving and taking something valuable in my studies, social life and relationships? My being different is not a threat but a broadening experience to others. Today in the seminary we learn what is new, what is different, progressive and solid, that tomorrow when we go out either to our own communities or elsewhere in the world, we are better prepared for an effective ministry for the Lord.

A last word about the kingdom of God—existential or eschatological. By accepting Jesus' lordship, we have already enrolled ourselves in the kingdom. Our task is not to be satisfied with our own achievements of personal salvation and grace but to help others receive it and see a new order of justice, peace, love and unity in Jesus Christ and in the world. It will take both words and actions, evangelism and social actions to proclaim this kingdom, plus a heavy price of self-sacrifice to establish it.

Are our churches together with the seminary extending the kingdom of God? Are the visions and goals, priorities and strategies, structures and philosophies, reasoning and feelings in good harmony? In that way the Spirit of the Lord can move easily among us and through us.

At this point my prayer (also of many) is: Lord, use MBS as a channel of your witness to the believers. May our existence as an academic/spiritual community be an overflowing reservoir of living water, which is your Word, and a base from which we follow your command, "Go ye into the world. . . ."

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## Faithful stewardship

**Seeking First the Kingdom** *by Robert A. Yoder (Herald Press, 1983, 99 pages)*

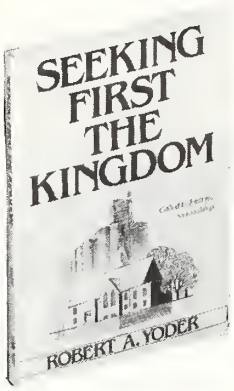
*Reviewed by Calvin Redekop, Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6*

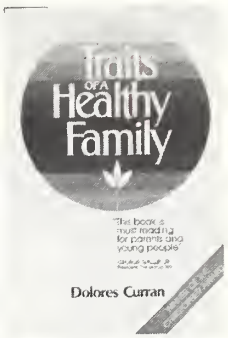
In his attempt to establish the fact that science is objective, a colleague of mine used to tell his sociology classes that "you can't judge a book by its author." His point was the private life of that author had no necessary connection with the truth of what he is trying to say. This may be true for a book on mathematics, but it is certainly not true for ethical topics. It is not possible to talk about stewardship of God's creation without practicing what you preach.

The credibility of Yoder's attempts at stewardship make this an important book. The author knows the issues and has developed a lifestyle that speaks to those he raises. Yoder ascribes this integration to his experience in the Roanoke Mennonite Church, where he received the training that brought him to ask, "What does it mean to be one of God's people in the middle . . . between the beginning and end of history?" (pp. 18-19).

In seven short chapters Yoder attempts to answer that question. First he suggests that we must experience a "holy disturbance" (chapter 2) so that we are aware of what the call is. He then shows how we are almost wantonly destroying the creation God has given. The consequences of the technological revolution are presented, followed by his call for the "conversation ethic," which he says is totally biblical. Then he applies the conversation ethic to Mennonites and suggests they are not immune from criticism. Stewardship of creation cannot be equated with giving the tithe, but with a wholistic care for resources and sharing them with the rest of the world. He is afraid that affluence has caused Mennonites to rationalize their self-indulgence.

With numerous pieces of information about the way we are wasting and polluting the earth and about the increasing numbers of people who are starving today, Yoder sets before us the challenge of being faithful to God's call. Though it can be argued that Yoder does not follow a tightly organized progression in his narrative, the overall impression and impact comes through all the more. For example, he discusses the true cost of food and suggests that it now takes two bushels of American soil to produce one




bushel of corn. How efficient is the American farmer? On page 49 he states, though he doesn't explain, that the American farmer with his huge equipment is not as efficient as the Asian rice grower. On page 65 he maintains that the lifestyle issue is one of the most difficult topics that can be discussed by Christians.

Yoder has addressed many of the practical issues Christians face in answering the question of faithfulness. The positions or convictions he presents are the results of having lived both the problems and the solutions.

This book is a charming and readable prolegomena for all Christians who want to start the dialogue about what it means to be faithful to God's call today.

## Family strengths

**Traits of a Healthy Family** *by Delores Curran (Winston Press, 1983, 280 pages)*

*Reviewed by Randy Krehbiel, COE co-secretary for family life education, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*

This book looks at family strengths. Curran intends to refocus on what is good in family, providing guidelines for building family strengths. It is written for teachers, pastors, parents, family life educators and young people.

Curran sent out 500 questionnaires to pastors, teachers, pediatricians, social workers, etc., asking them to identify the traits of a healthy family. This book focuses on the top 15 traits. The number one trait is "A healthy family communicates and listens." Words like support, respect, trust and humor appear frequently in this book. Other traits in the top 15 include a sense of play and humor, sharing leisure time, teaching right and wrong, valuing services to others, developing a sense of trust, and a shared religious core. For each of the traits, Curran discusses the comments of her respondents as well as her own views.

This book is an excellent resource for all those concerned with families, particularly those who prefer to build family strengths and celebrate hope rather than bemoan a gloomy fate. Different reviews have described this book as "superb, classic, practical, theoretically sound. . . ." It has been acclaimed by religious educators and by a wide variety of human service professionals. It is a good blend of theoretical background with common-sense, simple language. It is must reading for those who live in families and those who serve families.

## Practical guide

**Creating an Intentional Ministry** *by John E. Biersdorf (Abingdon, 1976, 256 pages)*

*Reviewed by Anne N. Rupp, co-pastor at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church, Box 8, Goessel, KS 67053*

Surveys have shown that more than 50 percent of pastors feel their work in the church is ineffective. Biersdorf, director of the Institute of Advanced Pastoral Studies in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., has edited a book (with 12 contributors) which gives some new directions. The focus on intention rather than only reacting to what is happening is helpful.

With the understanding that "we cannot be all things to all people at all times" (p. 22) and that contemporary erosion of faith as well as cultural change make the social supports for a traditional vocation fragmented, Biersdorf encourages the pastor to begin by asking questions such as, "What is most important in my ministry?" "What do I do well?" "What realities must I accept as limiting factors in my present situation?" Out of these questions further chapters deal with issues such as negotiation, career planning, discovering one's strengths, interview process and goal setting.

Aimed at helping the pastor gain a sense of direction without losing the essence of vocation, the chapters prove to be not only informative but also helpful in a practical sense.

This book is a worthwhile investment for pastors, congregational leaders and people who are interested in intentionally creating the church and its ministry rather than merely letting it happen.

# MEDITATION

## What is spirituality to you?

Most of us know the scene. The family has gathered around the table. Talking gives way to silence as parents bring out the family Bible and the daily devotional guide. A reverent stillness prevails even among the small children as we listen to the Scripture being read in measured, holy tones. A short meditative thought from the devotional guide follows in a lighter but still somber voice. Now one family member leads in a prayer of simple thanks and petition, mentioning an application drawn from the readings or some family need and closing with a return of thanks for the meal. With the final amen, devotions are completed and the family resumes the business of the day.

This image of family devotions is often not realized or even desired today. It leads directly to the question, "What do we Mennonites make of spiritual life today?"

In view of the confusion, abuse and dirth of spiritual practice today, I offer the following suggestions.

**1. God can be found.** Despite all of the shallow, manipulative verbage that pretends to be spiritual and despite the fact that God is utterly beyond us, God does intersect our lives in ways we can understand and from which we can receive strength and direction. God is within us. Desire and determination to discover the places where God touches our lives are the prerequisites to finding the God who seeks us.

**2. Spirituality that does not lead to action is false spirituality.** The social consequences of being with Jesus must be stressed in our exercises of prayer and devotion. Faith without works is dead, and works without faith are dead.

**3. Finding God means becoming an individual before God.** Our churches, schools, small groups and other community activities, important as they are, often become hiding places for us, excuses for avoiding the God who meets and addresses us as individuals. People who have no individual standing before God are merely bland products of group influence. Those who stand individually in relation to God express that individuality in the world in a unique, creative way, without fear that someone else is smarter, stronger, happier or more spiritual than they.

**4. God must be sought in the context of community.** God has made us for each other. To be outside of community is to violate the harmony in which God intends us to live. Our sisters and brothers assist us in our discovery of God, not because they are precise patterns for us to follow, but because they are pointers along the way. They keep us from dangerous paths and remind us of our secure place within God's kingdom. One of the most valuable things we can find is a friend or spiritual director who will walk with us on our spiritual journey.

**5. We must seek God intentionally.** Although God often comes to us in surprising ways, progress on the journey comes only through careful cultivation of our spirits.

**6. God is found in silence.** Although God is present everywhere, we discover God's Spirit within us when we are quiet, still, listening. Spiritual disciplines like personal devotions, meditation and retreats can help us discover the silence wherein God dwells. But we must make time for silence and quiet the whirl of thoughts within us to listen to the Voice Within. Our words and actions have power only to the extent that they rise out of our silence.

*Roger Smith*

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For 25 years now Mennonite Biblical Seminary has cooperated with Goshen Biblical Seminary at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. It seems to be a beautiful partnership. Student enrollment repeatedly hits new records. Alumni serve in many countries.

This issue focuses on student comments about seminary and about their spiritual pilgrimages. Our prayer is that we might become better acquainted with MBS and the way it serves our churches.


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# editorial

## Orthodoxy and orthopraxis

The articles about Mennonite Biblical Seminary in this issue reflect a new mood. Students write of super experiences in cell groups, spiritual retreats, internships and the seminary community. Some comment on special, disciplined academic work, but most seem to more readily recall other aspects of their education.

That is not the way it used to be. A majority would refer to their Greek or Hebrew exegesis, their new insights after reading Barth and Brunner, their excitement over an inductive exposure to the Psalms or to Revelation and a fresh pulse for Anabaptist history from Estep, Klaassen, Bender and Yoder.

It raises several questions. What is the purpose of seminary education? How do people prepare for leadership in congregations? Who decides what should have the strongest emphasis at seminary—academic discipline or practical training?

A recurring theme in Third World church leadership education is that orthopraxis is more important than orthodoxy. That has not been the case among our schools in the past. We have tried to train students in a rigorously disciplined orthodoxy—in commonly established teachings and practices of the Mennonite churches. The assumption is that three years of this gives students the necessary reservoir of resources to meet the practical challenges they will encounter—orthopraxis grows out of orthodoxy.

There are good reasons why emerging foreign churches have reversed this formula. Western orthodoxy is influenced by our culture. Western praxis (practice) has consequently often been imposed upon foreign churches by either Western leaders or native people trained in the West. The resulting Body of Christ is incongruous with its context and ineffective in its witness.

The articles in this issue are not evidence that disciplined study has been given a low priority at MBS. Any recent student, when questioned, testifies to the scholastic excellence demanded there.

But the articles in this issue reveal two things. Even Christian scholarship in its best form must provide avenues to integrate reflection with praxis. I see positive signs about this at MBS. It is in keeping with the "earthy" statement by Paul, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news" (Romans 10:15).

The second thing causes me concern. Between the lines I read that our conference and our seminary need some clearer goals for clergy formation. It reads to me as if students are too much at the mercy of their own visions or at the mercy of their experiences in a first ministry assignment. More guidance is needed on the nature of education for ministry.

Drew University Theological School did a follow-up of 22 graduates three years after they became pastors. Almost every interview expressed "occupational shock . . . between seminary and the parish." They found ministry inadequately defined in their training.

As a result, Drew prepared an "Integrity in Ministry Profile" for future training and for monitoring graduates (*The Christian Century*, Feb. 1-8, 1984, pp. 108-112). The profile has six components.

1. *A conscious and articulate theological stance that informs the whole practice of ministry, including the ability to do exegesis of Scripture for teaching and preaching.* This is orthodoxy in its best sense and it has no alternative. (2) *Regular and lively personal use of the means of grace (worship, ordinances, private prayer and meditation, and support group of peers.* This is orthopraxis in its best sense and it has no alternatives. (3) *Acceptance of the institutional context for ministry and willingness to take responsibility for administering the church as institution.*

4. *Concern for and leadership in mission aimed at social justice, including systemic change and relief of human need.* (5) *Concern for and leadership in mission as evangelism—understood as launching people into a lifelong faith journey, and not as just receiving new members into the institution.* (6) *A theory of the unfolding character of the Christian life for assessing a person's and a congregation's place in the process, with the accompanying skills to guide and support spiritual maturing.*

The Drew model may not fit for Elkhart. But it is time we do more to define an orthodoxy and an orthopraxis goal for pastoral education. It needs input from conferences, congregations, professionals and students. The potential in ministry makes this a privilege we must exercise more than we have to date. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

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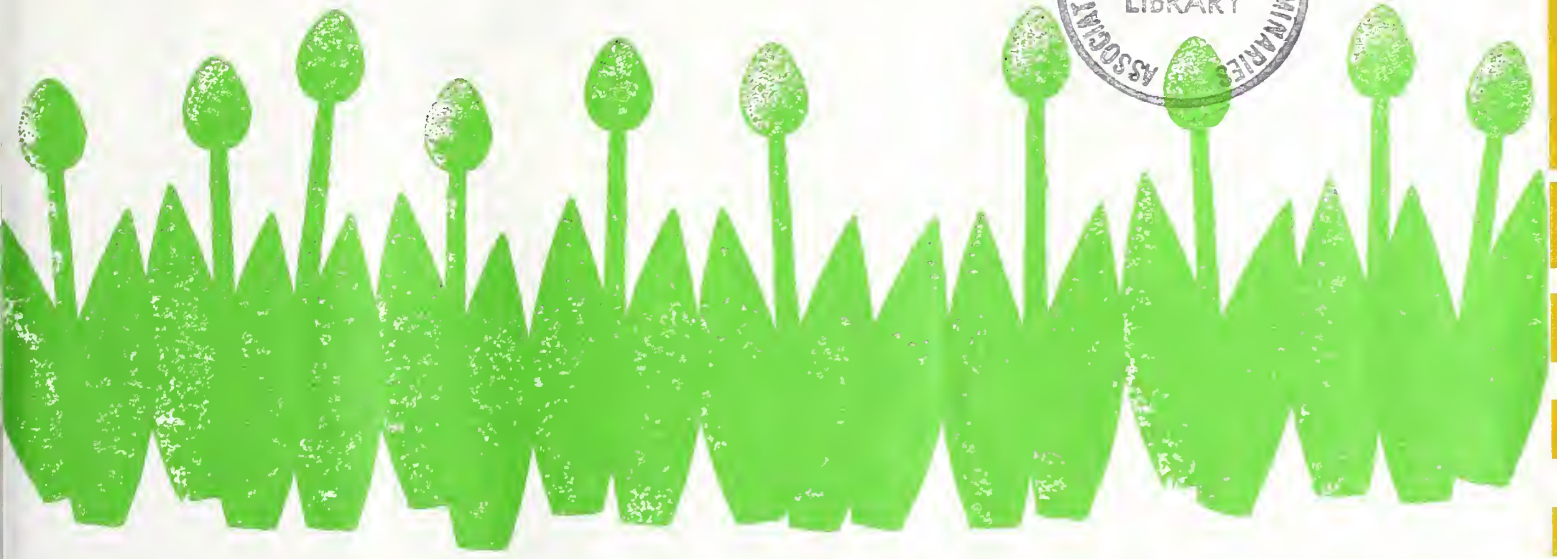
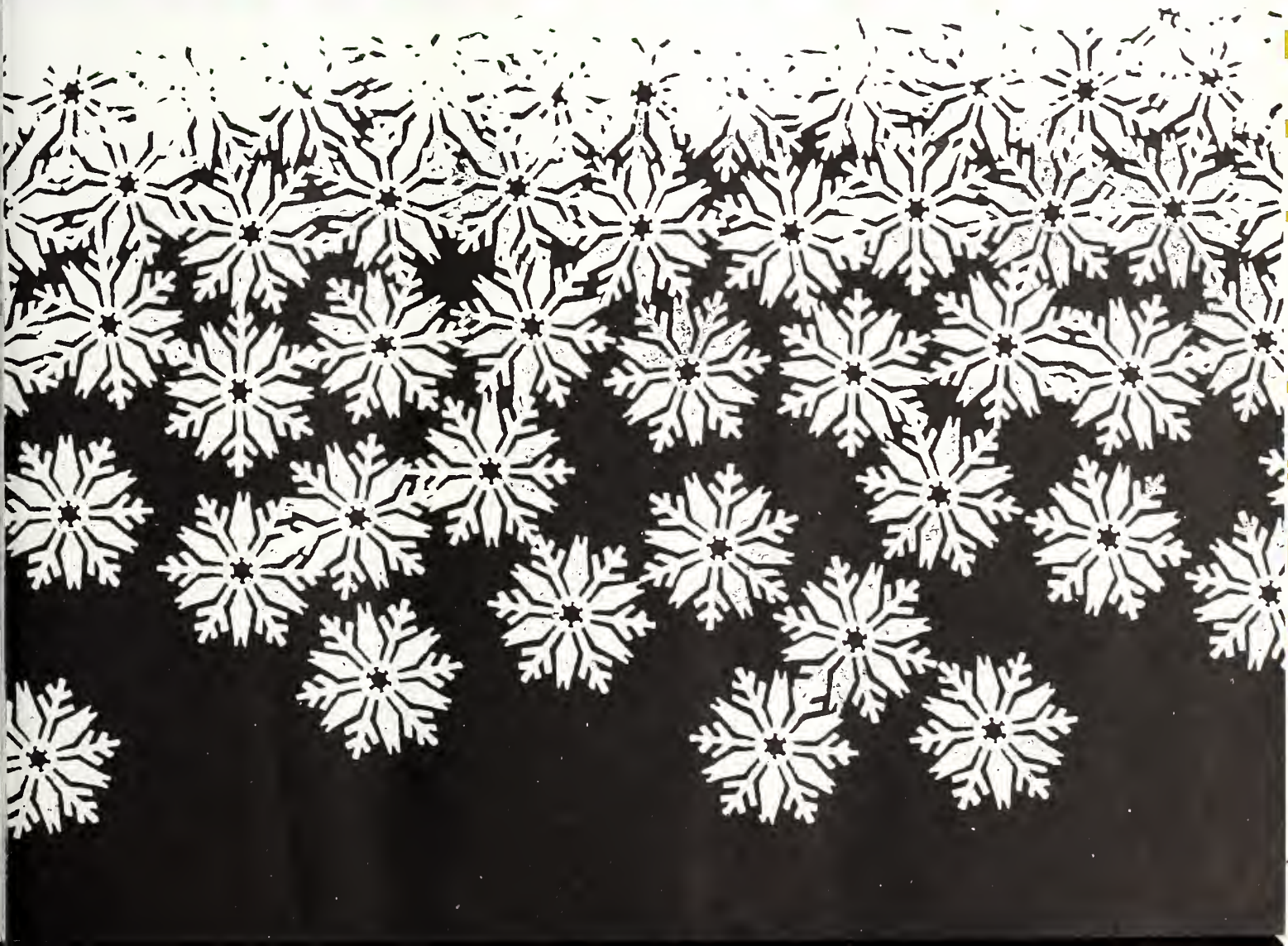




The wintry types need to express more warmth and affirmation.

# Also a 'wintry' faith

*Elsie Miller*

Martin E. Marty, associate editor of *The Christian Century*, seminary professor and prolific writer, in his book *A Cry of Absence: Reflections for the Winter of the Heart* (Harper & Row, 1983) describes two types of spiritual journeys, two types of faith: *Summery* and *Wintry*.

**Summery faith.** Words and phrases he uses to describe summer faith are: Spirit filled; PTL—Praise the Lord; they "radiate warmth," never show a frown on the face, lips are turned upward in a smile.

Motto: The Lord wills it. The Lord has satisfied every need (they keep hearing this). They reason it would be sin to stare at the void within. It's not supposed to be there. Christ is the answer. Shout the language of abundance and life. Declare: I am born again, I have been converted, I am a new being. Never look back—nor within.

The ways of the Lord are no longer mysterious. The ways of the Lord are clear and easily explained; so burst with joy, let no shadows loom. Raise your hands in praise.

Charismatic and Pentecostal groups personify summery types. Creators of many bestselling religious and Christian books are of this sort. Follow me—my advice—my prescriptions for life, happiness, success. Think the right thoughts—think positive; there is power in positive thinking. Christ is the answer. (Don't raise tough ugly questions.) God is immediately present. "I know" (they say) "because I just talked with him."

Listen to my evangelistic TV program. Send in $10. Buy this book and abundant sunshine and joy will be yours. Allow no chill to form around your soul. And honk if you love Jesus.

**Wintry faith.** Winter—often described as the dark night of the soul or the negative way to God in sermons labeled "Friday—it's 3 a.m."

Is the summer style being honest? I hear a cry within me—a cry of absence. God is unvoiced, unheard. God is not always quick to answer.

Does summer have a need to suppress? Don't you see the swollen bellies of the starving? Don't you see the parched tongues of children? Don't you see the flooding rivers of catastrophe?

You say you are enjoying a spiritual high. You can have one—if you create an illusion. Close your heart to the world of reality.

**That price is too high.** It is better to live with the mundane (at least that's honest) than to live by your kind of warmth and joy. I am repelled by your approaches, appeals. If that's conversion, I don't find it attractive.

Winter feels left out of that exuberant circle. I do not belong. Am I only half-saved? Must everyone follow the same style? Am I ruled out because I'm more restrained?

Karl Rahner, great German thinker, guiding member of the Catholic Church and responsible for identifying and naming these two spiritual styles, was interviewed and asked, "Which type should churches prefer?" He explained, "Both types are needed." Summery types need to be honest and know that

beyond their smiling facades, their forced "Praise the Lord," wintry souls experience absence, despair and death. Wintry types need to express warmth and affirmation. They cannot constantly dwell upon heavy, troublesome subjects.

"The church has to think more than it previously has done about how to frame its message for those who are troubled, who in the end have a faith which is not strengthened by a spirituality of the charismatic type." He advised testing one's faith and spirituality with those who have perhaps excluded God. He did not mean that the believer should move to unbelief—but know that the unbeliever, the secular person and the modern (who are not open to God) still could have some valid experiences.

Of the three books most influencing my life the past two decades, aside from the Bible, *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis, *Jesus Rediscovered* by Malcolm Muggeridge, and *The Greening of America*, two of the authors, C. S. Lewis and Malcom Muggeridge, were agnostics most of their lives, coming to Christianity later in life. And *The Greening of America* is definitely secular. I have been influenced in a positive way by former agnostics and secularists.

Frequently I have heard admiration expressed for the enthusiasm and exuberance shown by new converts, babes in Christ. They witness boldly, offer glowing testimonies. "They put us to shame," some admirers exclaim.

I submit we have been negligent in expressing admiration and support for the wintry faith type—the spirituality which grapples with pain, uncertainty, evil, mystery of death. It develops and grows with insight to strength and becomes a quiet, sober enduring faith.

**Do not sell short the faith quality of winter.** Wanted, needed, is a piety for those not naturally pious. We find such teaching in the Scriptures—notably Job and the Gospels. Few of the disciples are summery sorts for whom the immediate experience of God is natural or easy. They are often pictured as slow to learn and not easily satisfied spiritually.

It is the wintry Psalms—90, 23 and many others—people turn to and request when they are lonely, ill, in times of death. Sometimes in crises the summery type is not helpful, too simplistic.

The summery view of death says, "Let's hurry past Friday to get to Sunday"—concentrate on healing. Read the popular books and view TV programs which deal only with success stories. People throw away their crutches. Cancer cells miraculously disperse and life is prolonged.

Yet winter knows that death remains. The challenge for the believing community is to produce realists. In Scripture we read nothing equivalent to a consoling cleric who enters the room of mourners late at night to give pat answers to the question, Why? Self-help philosophies fall silent in the face of pain and death. They refuse even to hear the cries of pain uttered. When it comes to tragedy, summer's answers come too quickly: "That little baby died because God wanted another angel."

Winter says to summer, "You insist upon knowing too much; you know more than you know." Summer is baffled by winter's statement.

While taking Clinical Pastoral Education at Central State Hospital in Louisville, Ky., my best friend was Jeff. He was physically handicapped with cerebral palsy. He had a noticeable limp. For a research assignment he read *Angel Unawares* by Dale Evans and was enraged, angry. He blew into a full winter storm. "No, no," he cried. "I do not have this handicap because God wants me to be a shining light—an angel to my family. Why would God do such a thing to me?"

The story is told of a person to whose life there came without warning a day of disaster. Her whole life was disorganized. She spent the day making a valiant attempt to straighten everything out.

There dropped in a pious person, clad in soft furs, not one wrinkle in her appearance. Hearing how things were, this person murmured out of her own immense security, "Isn't it sweet to know that it is all in his plan."

The other woman, with steady eyes, accepted this, but later confided, "That good soul will never know how nearly it was also in the plan that I should slap her—knock her flat."

**I affirm the wintry quality of faith** for its honesty—looking at reality without blinders, for its courage—asking the tough questions, for its humility—confessing to not knowing the answers, and for its congruence/integrity—attempting to make the inner and outer life congruent.

When I am ill or even dying, I possibly will be visited by hoards of summer people. They will be cheery, make bright conversation, will wish me well, and I will need their brightness to sustain me. I can't constantly dwell upon my illness, my dying. They will offer me Bible verses that just fit. They will be an inspiration.

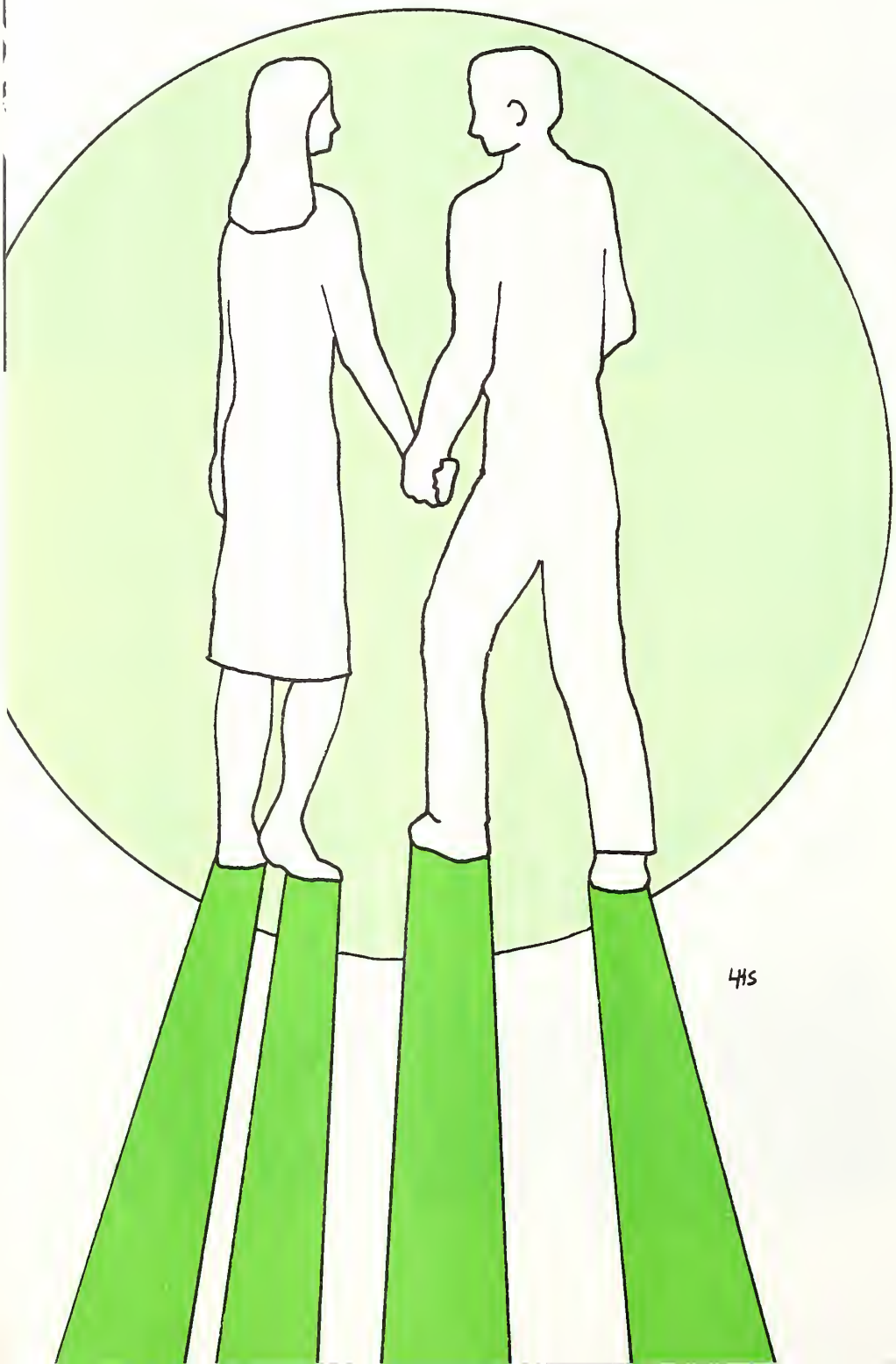
But I want to be visited by at least one winter person, one who sits by me, holds my hand, says little, but is there. One who cries with me and even confesses, "I don't know—I don't know why it has to be like this, but I do know that I love you; you are loved."

To this winter person I can rant and rave if I am angry, cry out if I am in stark pain. The winter person will not be shocked by my behavior, will not lecture me on my lack of faith, because that person has lashed out at life, at God, and has found that God can take it. •

**Summery types need to be honest about those times of absence and distance when smiles simply don't cut it.**

# How is Mennonit

*"The first point couples mention is that they didn't realize how important it was for them to have a time away just for themselves. . . ."*




*Gordon Houser of* The Mennonite *staff interviewed Paul and Lois Unruh, directors of Mennonite Marriage Encounter (MME) since September 1978, who left the position in August 1983. (Randy and Myrna Krehbiel now carry this as part of their assignment.)*

*The Mennonite:* What are some comments you've heard about MME?

*Lois:* We give every couple that attends MME an evaluation sheet. The first point couples mention is they didn't realize how important it was for them to have a time away just for themselves. It's also overwhelming to them what being alone, away from children, job and household responsibilities and not being asked to socialize but to think only about their relationship does for their marriage.

*TM:* Is that so rare?

*Lois:* It's mind boggling how rare that seems to be.

*Paul:* That same feature feels very threatening to some couples, and probably to all couples part of the time.

*TM:* What about complaints?

*Lois:* Some people have referred to how much the pastor couple is involved. There are 12 presentations throughout the weekend and a lay person and a pastor couple do each of these together.

*Paul:* This gives the appearance that we don't trust lay couples to say anything without a pastor couple to give it a "rubber stamp."

Another criticism is that people don't know enough about the weekend before they come. But most of them admit it's hard to tell anybody what happened. So it's kind of a wistful complaint: It would be nice if. . . .

*Lois:* We try to answer questions that people have and we encourage people to talk to other couples who have attended MME.

*Paul:* One person told us we don't say enough about the joys one can expect from the weekend. I think we're probably too modest in our information because we don't want people to think

# Marriage Encounter doing?

they're coming to a recreational weekend.

*Lois:* People aren't going to learn magic techniques about how to have a better marriage. They'll learn to talk to each other and see examples of that from the team couples. That's basically all we do.

*TM:* How does that work?

*Lois:* We share from our own experiences of working through things, especially using a writing technique. There's a lot of exposure from team couples' lives.

*TM:* What are MME's successes and failures?

*Paul:* The successes are really individual, as are the failures. Just the time set aside does a lot for couples. They often find they have not been doing much talking. When they do, it pays off.

*Lois:* Most couples have a positive experience. But unless they work to continue this growth, some value of the initial weekend is lost. That's where I see the biggest failure.

*TM:* Have you altered the structure of MME for follow-up?

*Lois:* From the beginning we've said this is the job of the congregation.

*Paul:* It's hard to run nurture programs out of a central office. The nurture of marriage and family life is a congregational responsibility.

*TM:* Do you communicate with the pastor of the congregation that a couple is from?

*Lois:* Not directly. We give guidelines to couples about how to start a continuing group.

Other expressions of ME, such as the Catholic, have follow-up meetings with the entire group. We haven't gone along with that. We tell couples that for their growth they need to get together with other couples with whom they can talk seriously about their marriage. We tell them to look for other resources, such as communications workshops or seminars.

*TM:* Do you offer a list of other marriage enrichment opportunities?

*Lois:* Only informally.

*TM:* Do you offer ideas, such as setting aside 30 minutes each week?

*Lois:* Yes. We encourage what is called the dialogue technique on a regular basis and then that they evaluate it and discuss whether it is helpful for them.

*Paul:* We give them a list of 90 questions they can use as starters to talk about.

Our original statement that nurture of family life is a congregational responsibility is still accurate as an ideal. But many people are telling us that we're fooling ourselves if we think the average congregation does that.

*Lois:* What's disillusioning for couples is that on an ME weekend they see what marriage can be like. Then they go home and often don't have contact with other couples or a small group. They've seen what it can be but discover they can't do it alone.

*TM:* There are parallels to that with other areas, like evangelism or church renewal.

*Lois:* Also, some people are in small groups, but they say their groups don't talk at the depth which happens in ME.

*TM:* How would you evaluate Mennonite marriages?

*Lois:* Except for couples that come talk to us, the format excludes group discussion, so it's hard to draw any systematic conclusions.

*Paul:* We have made some observations we can share at the risk of generalizing. I think many couples, maybe most, seldom talk intentionally about their marriage relationship. Secondly, conflict resolution is a major threat for many couples.

*TM:* They withdraw instead of working out their differences?

*Lois:* Often one does. One talks and the other gets silent.

*Paul:* For that problem, ME is a good format because the couples see a team couple work through something, then people write their own thoughts and share them with their spouses.

*TM:* And only their partners read these?

*Paul:* Exactly. They get together and talk about what each has written. And if there's any magic in ME, it's that encounter. You can almost walk down the hall and hear the "Oh" as they discover something new from a partner.

*Lois:* It still amazes me that there are so many couples who have never shared feelings.

*TM:* What do you mean by sharing feelings?

*Lois:* They talk about issues, but it hasn't occurred to them that the reason they get hung up is they don't understand the other person's feelings about those issues. They don't communicate on a feelings level.

*Paul:* As a people we have not learned the proper place feelings or emotions have in our personal lives and in our relationships.

*Lois:* Many people do not accept their feelings about certain things. If it's something they consider a negative feeling, they believe they should not have it and certainly should not share it.

*Paul:* I've sometimes said we need a more literal interpretation of the Bible on this issue. "Be angry but do not sin." Experience the emotion but be careful how you act it out. Probably one of the most sinful things we do with our feelings is to keep them inside ourselves—bury them.

*TM:* Would you guess that the Mennonite population is different from non-Mennonites in this area?

*Paul:* We tend to think Mennonites

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are different because we mostly know Mennonites. I suspect other groups have similar characteristics.

*Lois:* Generally, though, we were not given models of how to share feelings as we were brought up.

*TM:* Has the recent emphasis in our culture on sharing feelings had an impact on Mennonites?

*Paul:* Even some younger couples have been surprised by the statement that feelings have no morality—are neither right nor wrong. When you look at those who say emotions are OK, but then see how they do business with each other, you get the impression there's someone else talking. So they have the right ideas, but not the right kind of behaviors in their relationships.

Getting back to conflict resolution. In our own marriage relationship we have tended to not do conflict resolution in front of our children. That happened in both our families.

*TM:* So you think it's important that it be modeled?

*Paul:* Yes. I wonder if Mennonites didn't learn a little more than the average citizen in our society that we don't solve conflicts in front of each other.

*TM:* Do you think if it happened more in the family it would happen more in the church and between churches?

*Paul and Lois:* Certainly.

*TM:* Anything else on Mennonite marriages?

*Paul:* If we look at how the church relates to marriages, we notice that it places a great emphasis on the wedding day and says a lot about avoiding divorce, but little about in between. That's seeing marriage as a legal state rather than an ongoing process that must be regularly nurtured. Before that legal state, certain things cannot happen. After the wedding almost anything can, including abuse—physical, emotional or spiritual. The church has almost a hands-off attitude at that point. Not every church, of course. Another sad thing in some church marriages is the almost dead quality of the marriage. They're actually divorced people—in the relational sense—continuing to live together, adhering to a legal contract. And somehow the church gives less importance to that kind of divorce than to a legal divorce.

*Lois:* The church seems to be saying that it's the legal status that's important. As long as a couple has not violated the letter of the law and is not legally divorced, we don't worry about them.

*Paul:* That issue caused us trouble with our original philosohy that we provide a weekend event while the church provides ongoing nurture. If the average congregation pays little regular attention to the marriage relationship, then our philosophy is wrong. That's where we have felt the most frustration.

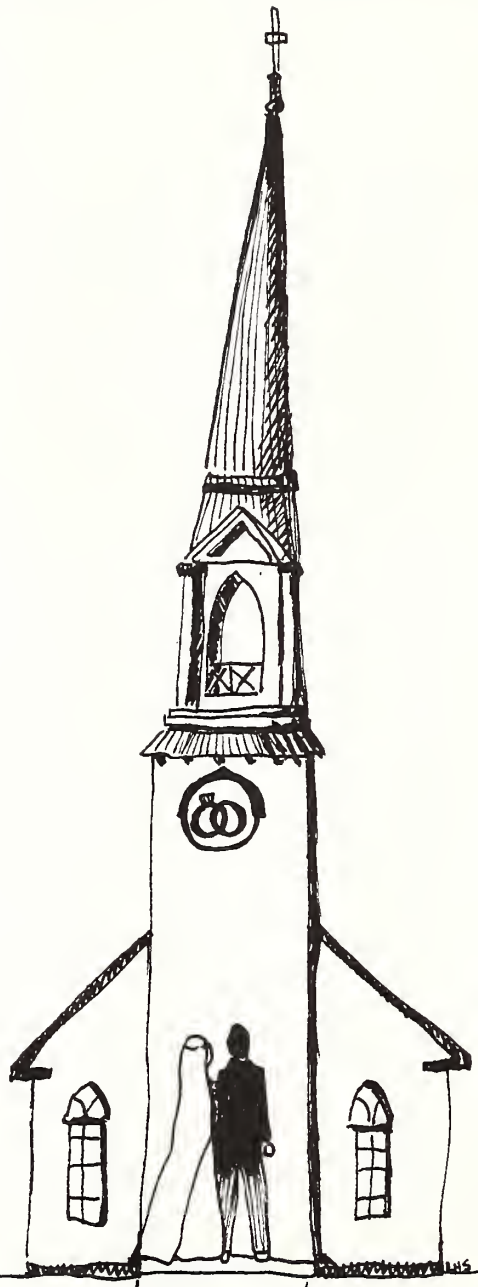
Churches do provide occasional workshops or sermons on marriage, but that's not enough. In a marriage enrichment workshop we did, one couple discovered they spent much more time nurturing their business relationships and talking together about their dairy herd than they did about their marriage.

*TM:* Any summaries?

*Paul:* I think the reason ME works is that most of us don't have another context in which we hear another couple tell how they negotiate differences, work through problems of roles, share feelings and describe their failures as well as their successes. It's good to hear others also struggle in their marriage.

We were hesitant at first to have professional people attend. But our minds changed after Jake Friesen, director of Ministerial Leadership Services, told us, "In terms of marriage relationships, we're all lay people. And you have no right to deny that experience to these people."

*Lois:* We've found that true over and over again. Regardless of people's professional or educational background, couples who come with the right attitude find it a growing experience. •



*If you look at how the church relates to marriages, you'll notice that it places a great emphasis on the wedding day and says a lot about avoiding divorce at all cost, but says very little about what happens in between.*

# Wisdom: meeting a lover

*Ted VanderEnde*

A great king sought her, and an even greater king embraced her. No wonder, for her promises are precious. Yet few listen to her gentle but intense invitation: "To you, O people, I call out: I raise my voice to all mankind. Listen, for I have worthy things to say. . . ." Her call is continuous and to all: "Come, eat my food and drink the wine I have mixed. . . ." It is an invitation to intoxication, a request to sit at her table filled with foods which satisfy more than gold and silver. Indeed, a lover who can deliver.

Yet with grief she observes, "You rejected me when I called, and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand. . . ." Such rejection is even stranger when we hear that her rival entices multitudes to death, while her fare brings life. How can you refuse such a lovely lady? For though she seeks your love, she often finds disinterest. It reminds us painfully of Jesus who became "our wisdom," who stood in the open places inviting all to eat the bread of life and was rejected as well.

Nevertheless, lady wisdom is available to all of the simple in need of understanding. Just as King Solomon perceived that it was wisdom he lacked, and King Jesus submitted to growth in wisdom and knowledge, so you and I should not turn aside from the advances of wisdom. Her urgent appeal speaks for itself: "Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forsake wisdom and she will protect you; love her and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme, therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Esteem her and she will exalt you; embrace her and she will honor you. She will set a garland of grace on your head and present you with a crown of splendor" (Proverbs 4:5-9).

Why wisdom? Together with the priest and prophet, the wise man or woman played an important role in the Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern society. While the priest brought a person to God through atonement and teaching, and the prophet brought God to the person through revelation, the wise man or woman brought person to person through wisdom (*chokman*). Wisdom is needed where people live together. Thus in moral trouble the priest could find a solution in sacrifice. When God was troubled with the people, the prophet brought the possibility to return. When neighbor had trouble with neighbor in the nitty-gritty, day-to-day life, he paid a visit to the wise man or woman, who then gave judgment.

*'To you, O people, I call out; I raise my voice to all mankind.'*

Thus young Solomon sighed and said, "Your servant is here among your chosen people, too numerous to count. . . . Who is able to govern this great (or many) people of yours?" To solve his dilemma, God granted the king's request for wisdom. Wisdom is needed in any rule, whether it is the rule in nation, family or church. It is wisdom that brings healing in broken relationships. Therefore, knowing that being a king meant ruling people—people who would seek judgment in their brokenness—Solomon asked for wisdom. In the biblical example of the two mothers who quarreled over one child, we find a touching and intense example of how wisdom approaches broken relationships between people with justice and discernment.

Though sadly slipping in late life, Solomon goes down in history as the king of peace. Wisdom is the other side of peace. To be wise is to love shalom. To seek understanding is life. Thus the summary statement of James makes sense. "But the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure; then peaceloving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness" (James 3:7, 18).

Mennonites, who have a love affair with peace, should therefore love wisdom. From wisdom springs the life of peace, as ultimately is demonstrated in the foolishness of the preaching of the crucified Christ, "the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24). In Christ we find ultimate wisdom, and to know that wisdom is to enter a life of shalom.

Wisdom, for some time, was a forgotten subject among Bible students and scholars. Greatly loved by simple folks (Who doesn't love Proverbs and James and the Sermon on the Mount—the wisdom supreme?), it was relegated to a backseat in the theater of biblical studies. Happily, that is changing, and today much study is given to wisdom. We hope this series on wisdom will also enlarge your Bible knowledge. However, it must begin with an attitude of wanting to, the "yes" of a lover invited to an embrace.

*First article in a series on wisdom*

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# We married two times

*Bruce Larson*

*An easy divorce was Don's solution to disappointments, and Gwen was faced with the necessity of rebuilding her life and raising the children alone. Then through peculiar circumstances, Gwen and Don rediscovered each other.*

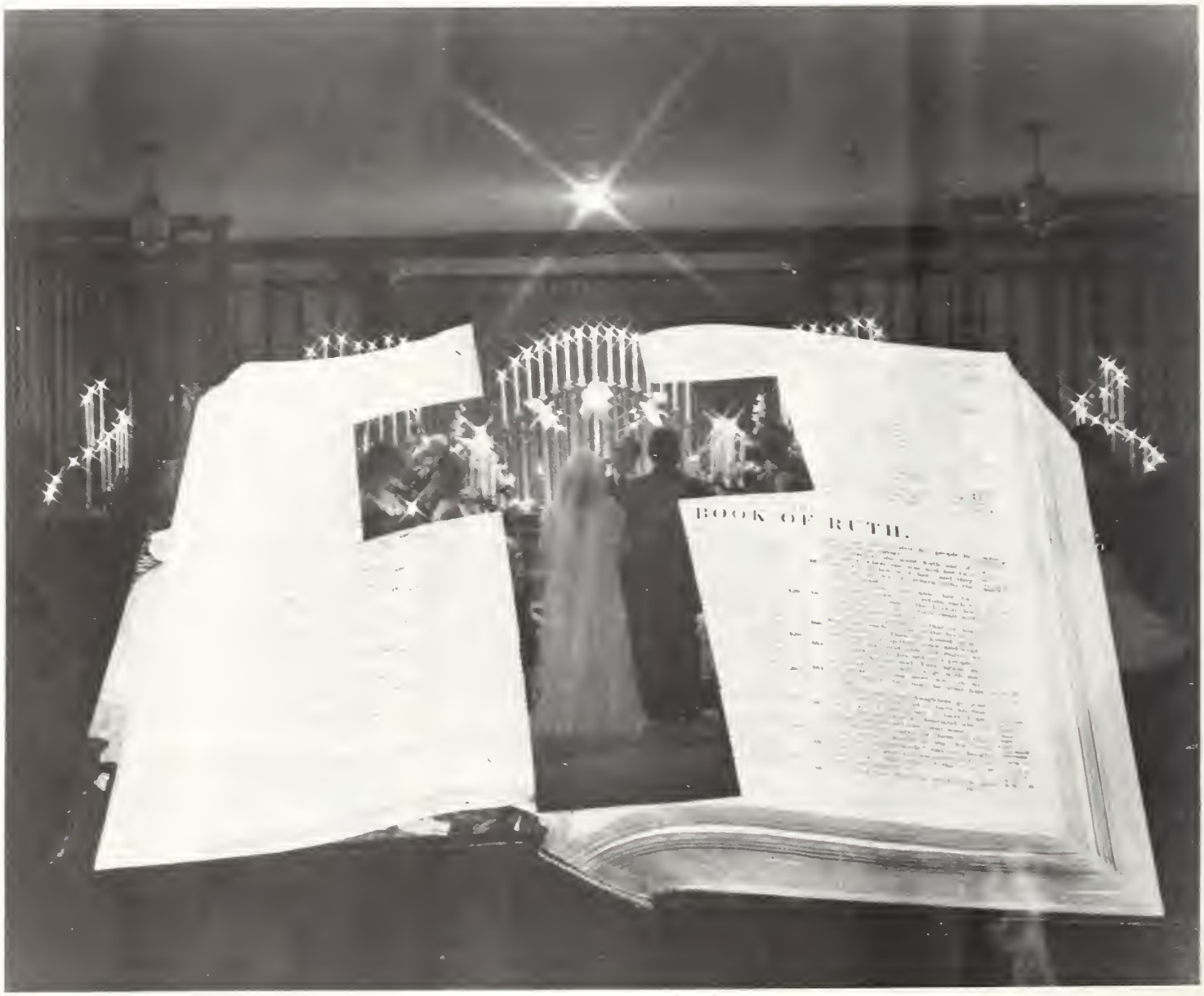
Don and I have been married for a little over three years, have never been married to anyone else and yet have four children, the oldest 14 years old. Before you get too shocked, let me explain that we were married, divorced after 11 years and remarried a year later.

Even before the first wedding our relationship began to break down because we were basing marriage on the wrong things. I chose Don because he represented financial security and a strong father image, because I was used to him, and deep down because I wondered if anyone else would want to marry me.

Don on his part wanted to marry me to get away from home, and yet he saw in me qualities that would make me a mother to him. The only plus on the ledger was that we were sexually attracted to each other.

With that kind of foundation, things went from fair to bad to worse. I depended too much on Don; he could not find a mother in me. As the children came along, they only made his immaturity more apparent. He couldn't communicate with them on a parent-child basis because he wasn't emotionally grown up.

Meanwhile, Don became more and more successful in business. He used this, along with a domineering hand at



home, to prove his masculinity. We had the best-behaved children in the neighborhood, but the oldest two were emotional icebergs. Cindy showed this by withdrawing from society. She had no real friends but buried herself in schoolwork and imitated her father's tyrannical attitude toward her younger brothers and sister. Donnie, next in line, swung the other way. He was happy only with his peers, avoided adult relationships and lived for play. And I was too immature to cope with the situation.

Without our knowing it, our love for each other and for the children was completely conditional. I loved Don if and when he came home on time for dinner, was nice to the children, polite to my parents and uncritical of me. He loved me if I kept a spotless house and entertained smoothly.

Don was gradually finding companionship away from the family and was home less and less. Finally he moved out. I was so without stability, direction and any source of love that I became almost totally numb.

My younger sister, who belongs to the same church we do, called our pastor, and he came to see me. This was the beginning of a friendship and a series of experiences which seemed incredible. My awakening to Christ began—and I thought I had been a Christian for years. Actually I hadn't even been much of a "churchian." I'd seen to it that the children went to Sunday school, but more often than not I'd skipped the worship services.

But now my interest grew and I began to make new friends in the church. I was invited to join a small weekly prayer group. We experimented with praying aloud in an atmosphere of love and mutual acceptance, believing and expecting definite answers. Month after month we prayed, not that Don would "come to his senses" and return home, but that he might realize his only help and strength lay in Jesus Christ.

In spite of the anguishing circumstances that surround the process of separation and divorce, God removed feelings of bitterness and hatred. I was maturing as a person, realizing my worth as a child of God—unique and lovable in his sight. So, while I felt no need to get back at Don, I no longer needed to be a doormat either.

Slowly and painfully I was learning that I did not need Don in order to be fulfilled. My ultimate dependence was on God. I learned I could be a completely free and joyful person in the midst of hellish circumstances. Jesus Christ became a living person to me and I sensed that God had a definite plan for my life. It needed only my daily affirmation.

Don, meanwhile, was living out his own hell. He finally went to an astute psychotherapist who said, "Don, you will get well faster than most because you really want to and because you are living out your rebellions every day."

When the sources of Don's problems lay before him and he was beginning to be emptied of many of his frustrations and fears, he was ready to hear the "still, small voice" of God that told him one Saturday evening to call and ask if he could take the children to church the next day. We had not seen Don for many months, so it was a good thing I was sitting down when I answered the phone.

The next morning brought Don's first experience of love in action in the Christian community. After church he was welcomed by many of my friends who knew our story. He wasn't made to feel like the "dog who left that poor girl with four kids to raise."

For the next seven or eight months Don and I began to rediscover each other. As he related to me what had been going on, I started for the first time to understand what had made him the way he was and rejoiced with him in his new sense of release. Don saw I was a different person in many ways and it intrigued him into finding out how this had come about. We went to church together and he attended our Laypeople's Retreat with me. In church we were nurtured. We experienced together that since God loves us where and as we are, we are freed to love each other fully and unconditionally. We now know from personal experience the healing power of God that can change people.

People who attended said ours was the "wettest" wedding on record. They shared in the deep spirituality of the moment and there were few dry eyes. Our four children and both sets of parents were seated in the front pew and heard us exchange our vows.

The only note of discord occurred when Ray, who was then five, burst into loud howls. It was two or three embarrassing minutes before he could tell me he wasn't sorry I had married Daddy again, but that he had expected me to wear a long white bridal gown and veil.

The first year of our new marriage was devoted to being a whole family again and learning to live out the Christian life in our home. This second marriage has love, purpose and direction because Don and I know who we are and whose we are. Our marriage, our children, our church work, Don's business, our money has been committed to Christ and we are constantly finding more and more to give over to him.

We have discovered our definite and separate roles in marriage. Don's role is to help guide in spiritual matters, to set policy, to make major decisions and, above all, to love me as Christ loves his church. My role is at the heart of the family, our children's strongest ally and fiercest critic, and a wife.

In these past three years we have just begun to scratch the surface of living the abundant life. We still face problems. The children have blossomed in an atmosphere where we no longer try to impress our own images on them but try to find what God has in mind for each one.

Nearly every night we have family devotions. These have produced some discussions resulting in a wonderful closeness. The children participate and have their say.

Our marriage enrichment growth group of six couples meets every other Friday evening. We come together for mutual love, support, learning and dialogue. This completes the circle of what to us are the necessary ingredients of living this abundant life: prayer, the reading of God's Word, fellowship with other Christians and service to others.

I thank God every day for the miracle of our reunion and for the delightful man to whom I am married. Don has soared way ahead of me, but I enjoy learning from and with him. So we celebrate only the anniversary of our second wedding—it's the one that really counts.

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# Conference relationships get clean bill of health

Sioux Falls, S.D.—Official consultations about General Conference and Conference of Mennonites in Canada relationships began in 1976 at Sioux Falls when the top 20 staff people from both conferences sat down to tackle the subject. The topic and site were revisited April 11-13 by 17 staff and elected people from the two bodies.

"The tenor of this meeting is so different from the ones I have previously attended, I wondered whether I could go home the first day," said Don Steelberg, chairperson of the General Conference's Commission on Home Ministries. "I'm glad for the change. It's good to talk as we have been doing. The atmosphere is extremely different."

Steelberg's comments reflected the nature of the 1984 consultation. It was more like a checkup than an operation.

In contrast to the 1976 meeting when the two general secretaries, then Heinz Janzen and Henry Gerbrandt, were asked not to chair the consultation because of vested interests, this time no one challenged Vern Preheim and Larry Kehler, current general secretaries, as the co-chairpersons. If there was any sparring at all, it had to be seen between the lines. There were only a couple of references to ghosts of the past.

Rudy A. Regehr, recently appointed executive secretary of the CMC's Congregational Resources Board, focused the consultation with a glimpse of recent GC/CMC history. In the '40s and '50s CMC people feared the influence from the south. In the '60s there was more interaction because some schools and institutions in the United States attracted Canadian students.

The '70s gave new perceptions to Canadians about themselves. It may have begun with the charisma of Pierre Trudeau, said Regehr, since no structures exist apart from social/political reality. Vietnam cracked the myth of U.S. invincibility. CMC people caught this too and began to feel pro-Canada and anti-U.S. Leadership styles were changing more radically and rapidly in Canada toward a more collegial, consensus-gathering, servant style. Politically, Canada began to see itself as a world player in its own right.

Vern Preheim had earlier reviewed GC/CMC history from 1976-84. When problems became obvious, the first joint staff meeting was held in 1976. The 1984 consultation was now the 10th in a series of dialogues on GC/CMC relationships. Meetings have changed to include elected leaders and district conference leaders. A structures committee existed for some years.

*(Left to right) James Dunn, Erwin Rempel, Edgar Rempel, Ted Stuckey, John Funk*

Some people consider the May 1981 Minneapolis meeting as the GC Schleitheim. There proposals for a CHM U.S. (as a division within CHM) and a U.S. assembly were formulated. After presentation to various conferences, these were implemented. This marked the dawning of a new era in conference relationships at all levels, according to some consultation participants.

In the future, Regehr said, there may still come GC/CMC conflicts about access to money and to power. The CMC will never again accept being seen as a district conference. Regehr's suggestion was that staff people with vision for appropriate missions can overcome political problems.

"The current feeling is that GC/CMC staff are peers instead of adversaries. Mutual respect has emerged. This 1984 meeting is our first one as peers," he concluded.

Essentially no one argued with Regehr's analysis and the discussion seemed cordial. A joint agenda was then planned around such harmless issues as travel pools, update on the development plan, personnel policies and roles of the conferences.

The only discussion that came close to confrontation was on the meaning of political boundaries. Larry Kehler said that CMC people find it tough at times to relate to U.S. Mennonites feeling so negative toward their country.

"You seem, at times, to own the national guilt but fail to recognize paternal attitudes toward Canadians and others," he said. Vern Preheim responded, "It is hard to feel good about a country that invades Grenada and mines Nicaraguan waters."

CMC participants argued the need to accept certain realities and become listening servants who feel pains and joys without readily resorting to confrontations or judgments.

In a session on future vision there was consensus on GC/CMC and other Mennonite cooperation wherever possible or necessary and some probing on how this could be encouraged. Concerns about an international General Conference and its relationship to North American minorities seemed too difficult to handle and were left as future agenda.

This was a process rather than a product meeting. "I believe process is at least as important as the product," were one person's closing comments.

While nobody called for a future consultation, Vern Preheim concluded, "I would like to see a checkup meeting again in two or three years." *Bernie Wiebe*

# Inspiration, celebration permeate Central District sessions

Kidron, Ohio—"Living HIStory" was the theme of the first joint meetings of the Central District Conference (General Conference) and the Ohio Conference (Mennonite Church) held at the Kidron Mennonite Church and Central Christian High School March 29-31.

Robert Kreider, keynote speaker from North Newton, Kan., developed the theme in three parts: "Growing Up in the Faith" (Stories from Childhood), "Though I Walk Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death" (Stories from Central America) and "Lord God, Go in Front of Us" (Stories of People in Pilgrimage).

Kreider suggested some universal questions which can be used as openers for significant sharing of faith stories. Two of those questions were: In a world falling apart, what gives you hope? and, How do you communicate your faith? Kreider's own down-home wit and wisdom shared in story after story showed the audience firsthand how to relate significant themes in appealingly simple ways.

Duane Beck led a series of Bible studies: "The Word Became Flesh" (John 1), "That the World May Know" (John 17) and "Authority to Serve" (John 13:1-17). He elaborated on three ways to interpret the Scriptures—the actual, the personal and the analytical.

The joint program committee, chaired by Mark Weidner, incorporated another innovative means of communication with an evening news program on "Station KOCD" which not only made announcements and reported events of each day but also spotlighted two church mice and a cleaning lady who shared their unique and humorous views of conference activities.

Bill Detweiler of the Kidron Church led a candlelighting service at the close of the conference which illustrated passing the Good News of HIStory to others and thus bringing light into a world of deep darkness.

Ohio Conference president Herman Myers commented on a lack of conflict-raising issues at this year's conference. "We came looking for unity," he said, and then noted that we seem to be surprised when we find it.

The only resolution which was passed by the Central District had to do with inter-Mennonite cooperation in the United States. However, the issue which kept coming to the forefront of business sessions as well as at other times was a concern for our brothers and sisters in Central America.

The Ohio Conference chose to formalize their concern about Central America with a resolution.

There was also a focus on church planting, and three new churches were received into the Central District Conference: Cedar Falls (Iowa) Mennonite Fellowship, Comunidad de Fe of the Brighton Park area of Chicago and Lafayette (Ind.) Mennonite Fellowship.

In a joint business session the two conferences welcomed a number of new pastors into their respective districts—some transferring membership from other districts, some newly ordained seminary graduates and others called to specific specialty ministries. *Ruth Naylor*

# *Canadian conferences to give direction on joining TV network*

Winnipeg (MCCC)—Mennonite Radio and Television Council members, meeting in Winnipeg on April 10, decided not to join the proposed Canadian Interfaith Television Network until the Canadian Mennonites give the go-ahead.

Members agreed to take the proposal back to their conferences for discussion and direction and asked the MRTC executive to attempt to gain consensus for Mennonite involvement in the network.

Discussion about the religious network, proposed by the Rosewell group, an umbrella organization representing Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Presbyterian and United Churches, Crossroads Communications, and Buddhist, Moslem, Hindu, Sikh and Unitarian communities, dominated the meeting. MRTC members wondered whether Mennonites could afford the $37,500 annual membership fee. "Can the money be better used for our own productions?" asked Dan Block of Mennonite Brethren Communications.

The $37,500 membership fee would give Mennonites 12 hours of program time per year on the religious channel.

Members also expressed concern about involvement in a "Christian ghetto station." Neil Klassen of MBC told the group that 80 percent of his organization's TV audience in Canada is non-Christian. "But when we ran it on the Christian Broadcasting Network in the United States," he stated, "the figures were reversed." Klassen indicated that he would rather reach non-Christians than Christians with MBC TV shows.

Other MRTC members shared his concern but agreed when he added that MRTC should not "stand in the way of something with tremendous potential." If the Rosewell group is granted a license, Mennonites will be able to purchase time, even if they decide not to join the venture.

Members also agreed to go ahead with a 13-week Choice Nine radio series with author and speaker David Augsburger. The daily series will feature selections from Augsburger's book *When Caring Is Not Enough* and will deal with conflict resolution. The meeting also featured discussion about the future of MRTC. A futures paper recommended long-term goals which include establishing a central MRTC office with a qualified media resource staff person, conducting a survey about media concerns in the various Mennonite conferences, creating a phone-in radio counseling program and producing Christmas and Easter TV specials.

MRTC is supported by Mennonite Brethren, General Conference Mennonites, the Mennonite Church, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference and MCC Canada. It coordinates inter-Mennonite media activity in Canada.

## Lapp appointed fifth MCC executive secretary

*Lapp*

Akron, Pa. (MCC) — John A. Lapp, provost of Goshen (Ind.) College, has accepted an invitation to serve as executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee. He will be the fifth person to serve as MCC's chief executive officer.

MCC has been seeking candidates for this post since executive secretary Reg Toews announced in December that he would not be available for reappointment at the end of his current term in January 1985.

Lapp has served with MCC Peace Section, in an MCC overseas assignment and on MCC boards.

Lapp, who has been provost and professor of history at Goshen College since 1979, was dean and history professor at Goshen from 1972 to 1981.

Lapp said he expects the question of how to "take more seriously world needs as perceived by our Third World partners, rather than as we perceive them," to be a major agenda item for MCC during his term of service.

**The Mennonite Historical Society of Manitoba** held its annual meeting March 17 in Winnipeg. The recording of the Mennonite Piano Concerto was completed in the past year. A monument in memory of Mennonites who lost their lives due to violence in the 20th century is planned. The size and form of the monument will depend on the funds contributed for the project. It is hoped that it will be in place by late 1985.

**In addition to death squad violence** and war deaths, malnutrition is a silent but big killer in El Salvador. Its victims are mostly children. The Beachy Amish Mennonites and Mennonite Central Committee have established nutrition centers in several communities to help ease the suffering of refugee children. In Guazapa several nutrition centers located throughout the small town provide three high protein meals for 100 children weekly. A typical meal consists of milk, tortillas, MCC canned beef and a fruit or vegetable. Refugee children who weigh less than 70 percent of the "normal weight" for their age are accepted at the center.

*Refugee children enjoy a meal of MCC beef and tortillas at a nutrition center in Guazapa, El Salvador.*

## *MCC worker dies in Tanzania*

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Mark Day, 26, of Monroe, Conn., died April 18 after he fell from a water tower in Buhemba, Tanzania. He was doing routine maintenance on the tower when he lost his footing and fell to his death.

*Day*

Day had worked with Mennonite Central Committee in dairy herd management at a rural agricultural training center in Buhemba since November 1981.

In March, Day wrote some of his thoughts on his work and faith: "The poor live from one day to the next. Their security lies in their faith in God. Here in Tanzania people regularly say, 'Hungu Akipenda' or, 'If God wills it.'

"Real hope lies not in our projects, schemes nor anything that men can do. It is that humble faith in God, knowing that he alone is our provider, that creates real and everlasting hope in any 'hopeless' situation. We from the West are not saviors, but only a small part of a changing world. We bring hope: Does it stem from the technology that we carry with us or from the faith that we share?"

Day is survived by his parents, Burton and Suzanne Day of Monroe, and one sister in Arkansas. He was a member of the Monroe Congregational Church. A memorial service will be held in Monroe.

The family has said that a memorial fund will be established to benefit agricultural work in Tanzania.

## Two positions

### Editorial assistant

A half-time position to prepare news releases, copy for CMC inserts in the *Mennonite Reporter* and other CMC publications as required. The assignment may require some travel.

**Qualifications:** A keen interest in CMC work, theologically informed, writing ability.

### Resource Centre manager

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## Arvada members arrested

Denver—Three members of the Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church were among seven people arrested for trespass after praying inside the gates of the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant near Denver on Palm Sunday, April 15.

Peter Ediger, Marge Roberts and Al Zook were held in federal custody in Denver and Fort Collins, Colo., for three days. Ediger is co-pastor of the Arvada Church.

Others arrested in the protest were Jennifer Haines, Anna Koop, Bill Sulzman and Shirley Whiteside, all members of Denver's Catholic Worker Community. Release on $500 bond was arranged for all but Zook and Haines, who chose not to put up the bond. Arraignment was scheduled for April 26.

The seven were accompanied at the prayer service by some 40 people who remained outside the gates who joined in Scripture reading, singing and prayer "for the cleansing of this temple."

"We have made this earth—your holy temple—into a den of robbers," the supplicants said. "We have robbed this earth—your holy temple—of its life-giving productivity and made it into a megaden storehouse for nuclear annihilation."

Three days earlier, on April 12, Zook and Peter Sprunger-Froese of the Bijou House Community in Colorado Springs affixed 54 peace signs to the three-mile east perimeter fence of the plant while altering other signs at the plant. They completed their protest without incident.

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THE MENNONITE
ASSOCIATED MENNONITE
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AMBS Bulletin
May 8, 1984

# God does all things well

The memory is both vivid and painful—but by this time, fragrant. Erland Waltner had been elected president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago. He in turn had a vision. The vision involved entering into an association with the Mennonite Church's Biblical Seminary then on the campus of Goshen College. But when the idea was communicated to the president of the college and seminary, Paul Mininger, and to the dean of the seminary, Harold S. Bender, they considered it inadvisable. Meanwhile Erland Waltner kept on patiently inquiring, "Are you certain that you have the Lord's answer? Have you prayed about it?" Those questions led to deep heart searching.

Finally, the Goshen leaders, Mininger and Bender, decided to take counsel of the many—then called Old Mennonite—district conference executive committees across North America. To their great surprise, those district conference executives tended to have an open mind. Only one committee was negative. On the other hand, one executive asked why they stopped at an association; why not simply merge? The bulk of the committees, however, stated it like this: "We do not know whether it is good or not; but we have confidence in you brethren. If you feel led to form the association, go ahead and do so, and we will give you our support."

The outcome was that MBS left Chicago and located in Elkhart. Students were transported to GBS classes in Goshen and to MBS classes in Elkhart by car and by bus. This unsatisfactory arrangement continued from the beginnings at Elkhart (1958) until 1969. In the latter year the Mennonite Church's Board of Education asked the GBS faculty to move their seminary offices to Elkhart, where MBS had graciously provided space for them. This was followed by GBS becoming co-owners of the AMBS plant. (MBS went the second mile in making this possible with a most generous offer.)

Now the "nitty gritty" of the association was put to the test. There were a few problems involved. But God proved to be immensely greater than the problems, and the love he had poured into the hearts of the MBS and GBS faculties was more than adequate to overcome the petty problems encountered. Over a quarter of a century the association has continued, and God has blessed. God does all things well. *J.C. Wenger*

*J.C. Wenger*

# A historical anecdote about Harry

One of the most beloved leaders in the General Conference Mennonite Church and in its sister groups is Harry E. Martens. He is a longtime MCC worker, a promoter of all sorts of crucial causes in the extension of Christ's church and a warm friend and brother. He worked behind the scenes about a year while Mennonite Biblical Seminary was being started at Elkhart.

*Harry E. Martens*

One of Harry's contributions was not behind the scenes, however. One of the first things he did was identify with the Kiwanis Club in Elkhart. The Kiwanis Club in turn was open to inviting the civic leaders of the community to a public meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 1957. It was my privilege to be present, along with some of my Goshen colleagues, president Paul Mininger, Leland A. Bachman and dean Carl Kreider.

Harry, as usual, gave a moving address. Among other things he lifted up a beautiful vignette from his MCC service time in Greece. When Harry was about ready to return to the United States he remarked playfully to a Greek mother of two sons, "Maybe I should take one of your boys along to America." The poor woman, thinking of how much better off her sons would be in the United States, quickly replied, "No, take both of them!"

There were many prayers offered during the difficult days when MBS was being built, but finally the happy dedicatory service was held in a tent on Sunday, Sept. 28, 1958. Praise be to God for the way he led during that difficult year—and since. *J.C. Wenger*

*These three reflections are selected from letters read at the 25th anniversary celebration held Oct. 14, 1983, at AMBS.*

*Harry E. Martens speaks at the groundbreaking services Sept. 3, 1957.*

## The Anabaptist tea meeting

I believe it was in 1952. H.S. Bender and I were visiting in his living room. He asked whether my brother, C.J., who was then serving with MCC in South America, was also going to attend Goshen College as I had done (1949-50). Jokingly I said it was enough for one in the family to make that mistake. Then more seriously I shared with him my good experiences and said that I coveted that for many of our General Conference young people.

We continued the discussion about GC-MC cooperation in education, especially on the seminary level. Finally we agreed to invite some brethren, no more than four from each of the two conferences, for an informal discussion. I was to invite GC people, and H.S. was to invite the MC people. I remember his suggestion that we meet in his home and that Elizabeth would serve tea. "Nobody can fault us for getting together and drinking Anabaptist tea," he said.

The meeting did take place. Brother Bender asked me to introduce the subject. That took me a bit by surprise but I said something about my own good experience as a General Conference student at Goshen College and Seminary and hoped we might explore ways of moving closer together in our separate seminary programs. I was by now attending the GC/Church of the Brethren Seminary in Chicago.

There were some questions, a few concerns, and one or two cautious but positive statements. Perhaps I had expected too much from this meeting, but I was disappointed. Orie Miller was the first to leave, having said very little, and as he left he simply said, "Thanks for the tea." For some time afterward I referred to that meeting as the thanks-for-the-tea meeting.

But the ball had started to roll. More informal meetings followed, with more people participating. Usually they were in connection with other meetings, such as the MCC annual meeting in the Atlantic Hotel in Chicago.

And then one day the group decided to keep minutes. The rest is history. *Peter J. Dyck*

## The twain shall be one

Beginning with the founding of Mennonite Central Committee in 1920 and for 64 years there has been an impressive and wide range of projects in which our two fellowships have found common interests and service. There have been mutually enriching experiences.

Probably the two areas of cooperation which have contributed most to these significant events have been our publishing and seminary efforts.

In publishing it has been such major projects as the four-volume Mennonite Encyclopedia and numerous Christian educational materials.

In seminary it has been the competent training of our future pastors, missionaries and church leaders.

Certainly when groups such as ours enter sincerely into cooperative relationships and service in projects with the potential influence as these there can be little doubt concerning the eventual outcome in full union. The celebration at Bethlehem '83 was a beautiful and convincing proof of the progress already made in this direction.

It is indeed proper that we now pause to recognize and pay tribute to the mission, courage and efforts of the generation before us and our gratitude to God for so graciously leading in Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. *A.J. Metzler*

*Library reading room on dedication day*

## The exploratory committee

It was my privilege to meet with the exploratory committee that met informally from October 1954 through the fall of 1955 to consider the pros and cons of a seminary affiliation between the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. A harbinger of the exploratory committee was a March 19, 1943, letter from Allen Yoder of the Central District Conference to the Mennonite Central Committee urging that the Mennonite Central Committee "submit a program of training for our ministers and Bible students in order that we might better conserve our common Mennonite heritage." After consideration, the MCC executive committee did not move further, probably because the idea was not then ripe and it was not within the jurisdiction of the Mennonite Central Committee.

My memories of the discussions in the exploratory committee meetings in 1954 and 1955 are that the Spirit led the negotiations. There are three things that I recall clearly from my own memory and from a perusal of my records.

The negotiations on both sides were done with a great sense of responsibility and integrity, combining sensitivity to each other. At each step the leading of the Spirit was sought. There were problems, but the obstacles were overcome through patient discussion and a feeling that it was God's will that the seminaries be related.

The understanding and goodwill of Bethany Biblical Seminary of the Church of the Brethren was remarkable. Bethany understood the desire of Mennonites to have the seminaries in some kind of relationship, and though Bethany assured the General Conference that their affiliation with it was a happy one, Bethany did not throw its weight on one side or the other of Mennonite seminary affiliation. Bethany was Christian in the highest sense of the word.

My principle disappointment in the negotiations was that other kindred churches in the Anabaptist family did not join the affiliation, though there were some negotiations for it. I believe that is a future agenda item and ought to be pursued. *William T. Snyder*

*Erland Waltner speaks at the dedication services Sept. 28, 1958.*

*Andrew R. Shelly, then on the Mennonite Biblical Seminary staff, at the groundbreaking in Elkhart, Ind., for the campus called, from the beginning, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. The year 1983-1984 is an anniversary year of the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in that it marks 25 years of cooperation in theological education. In this venture both Goshen Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Biblical Seminary have grown in numerical strength while at the same time developing a unified educational program. The celebration of this milestone on campus and in their constituencies is both a reminder of and a call to the possibilities of the grace of God.*

## Spring events

A number of events mark the culmination of the year-long celebration of the 25th anniversary of the association of Goshen and Mennonite Biblical Seminaries.

—Thursday noon, May 3, in the regular weekly seminary forum, C.J. Dyck and others shared stories of the past, contributing to the development of an oral history collection.

—Sunday afternoon, May 13, musical selections from the one-act opera "Family Reunion" by Alice Parker will be given.

—The annual graduation exercises are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on June 1 at the City Church of the Brethren, Benham at Wolf. The speaker will be Hubert Brown, pastor of Calvary Mennonite Church in Inglewood, Calif.

# Action and reflection in peace studies

"As I listened to story after story I began to feel the silence of God," says LeRoy Friesen, ethics professor at AMBS, in relation to the suffering he encountered in a trip to Central America 2½ years ago.

"One woman from Guatemala whose father had been involved in non-violent and legal efforts for social change for 20 years reported that five members of her family had been killed by the government. I felt God was germane to what is happening in the suffering in Latin America but I couldn't see how. What does the God of Easter morning have to do with this?"

During a "time of darkness" after his return from Central America, Friesen says, "I kept asking myself, where is God in the valley of the shadow of death? And I turned to the Bible. Where are the stories and themes that help with this question?" At that time Jürgen Moltmann, a guest lecturer on the seminary campus, pointed Friesen toward the image of the suffering God. Christians can't get to Easter morning without Good Friday, Moltmann said.

"The cross became a window into who God is in relation to suffering," Friesen explains. "I began to see that compared to 10 years ago hope for me has become less and less tied to a political solution, a public figure or a political party, and more rooted theologically in the cross and resurrection. God is making all things new through God's suffering."

A process of re-examining the foundations of Christian peacemaking can also lead one to discover or recover the centrality of peace in the biblical expression of the good news, Friesen adds.

"I'm discovering more and more that the primary reason why I can be a peacemaker is because the entire biblical story of making all things new through Jesus Christ *can* be understood as a peacemaking effort. That's what Ephesians 2 is all about—the breaking down of walls between God and humans, between ourselves and our enemies. In this passage Jesus is simply called 'our peace.'

"The church is a community confessing that security resides in God. This is a word for all seasons, particularly in times when trust in conventional political salvations wane. I have seen students suddenly seized by the power of that message and changed. I have seen them energized and sourced from the discovery that the call to peacemaking is to live and be in the way of the first peacemaker—the creator of the universe."

Friesen, director of one of the few seminary-based master of arts in peace studies programs in North America, must daily face the questions of the place of theological and ethical reflection in the life of Christian peacemaking.

Reflective activity is not simply a luxury, Friesen believes, for reflection on the theological foundations of social action can be critical for such action to retain meaning and direction over the long haul. Serious reflective work can deepen commitment to the biblical vision of *shalom* and its embodiment in the world.

In addition, reflective study of biblical and Christian history offers the opportunity to integrate personal peace and faith convictions with the experience and convictions of Christian peacemakers from the past. Such study helps ground individual and contemporary peacemaking action in a deeper and broader story which may be gleaned for inspiration and insights pertinent to current peace action.

*'The church is a community confessing that security resides in God.'*

Reflection on the dynamics of international relations and the causes of war, on theories of communication and conflict resolution, and on the meaning of and strategies toward peace, justice and liberation can further illuminate practical experience and in some cases reshape ministries of reconciliation.

Friesen's own conviction of the importance of being close to the suffering of victims of violence during the process of developing Christian peace theology grows once again out of his experience. As a representative of Mennonite Central Committee in the Middle East from 1971-76 Friesen "learned to know Israelis committed to shalom and Palestinians clearly concerned about justice." He began to see that "working at peacemaking apart from justice-making has little meaning. Apart from the urgency of the call to justice peace can become passivity and withdrawal from conflict," he says.

"I hadn't had to existentially struggle with this before Jerusalem," Friesen explains. "I also discovered anti-shalom within myself in an unprecedented way. While I had known cognitively that obstacles to peace begin first within myself, I began to see how this must become a much more integral part of my peace theology."

Immediate involvement in a conflict-ridden situation raised new theological questions and themes for Friesen and burdened him with a sense of the urgency for faithful action in the midst of suffering. For theological reflection to have proper perspective and integrity, Friesen concludes, it must grow out of and bind itself to peacemaking action. He emphasizes that peacemaking is not primarily a cerebral activity and describes the peace studies program he is helping to shape as one which "seeks to take seriously the biblical hermeneutic that knowledge grows out of obedience, and is thus committed to the integration of action, reflection and prayer."

How to maintain an adequate rhythm between action and reflection in an academic program remains a constant tension, however. Many students come to the two-year studies program with a wealth of practical experience in international or North American voluntary service or church ministries, or have been engaged in a peace witness or in the struggle with selective service. While two on-campus courses include supervised experience in peace-justice ministries and several Chicago-based courses include practical work in urban ministries, Friesen recognizes a need for a continuing search for creative ways to reinforce the action/reflection interchange.

Friesen underlines the fact that Christ's call is to become part of a peacemaking community. That means, on the one hand, that reflection on praxis or action is a communal rather than an individual task. Christian peacemakers voluntarily make themselves and their ministries vulnerable to the counsel of other disciples of Christ.

On the other hand, the call to community means that the context of reflection should not be a competitive, grade-oriented ethos, but one of genuine mutuality. The quality of community life as men and women before God is one measure of participants' openness to God's peace in their lives.

Community-based reflection by a peacemaking community which shares its life with victims of suffering in our world has the potential to uncover its theological and ethical blindspots and to find powerful ways to speak and live the good news of God's peace. Such insight and empowerment doesn't always happen and it doesn't always happen adequately, Friesen concludes, but the urgency of the attempt remains. "It is *together*, finally, that we hold the perspective from which we read and hear the daily news. And it is together as God's people that we can live with joy and compassion in the darkest time."

*Gayle Gerber Koontz*

**"Jesus, More in '84 (Romans 15:13)"** is the theme for the fifth annual Kansas Inter-Mennonite Renewal Celebration, to be held May 11-12 at Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston, Kan. Nelson Litwiller of Goshen, Ind., will be the speaker for the retreat. Registration begins Friday at 6 p.m. and costs $5 per person or a maximum of $15 per family. To register or for more information, write to Larry and Charlene Schmidt, Box 366, Moundridge, KS 67107.

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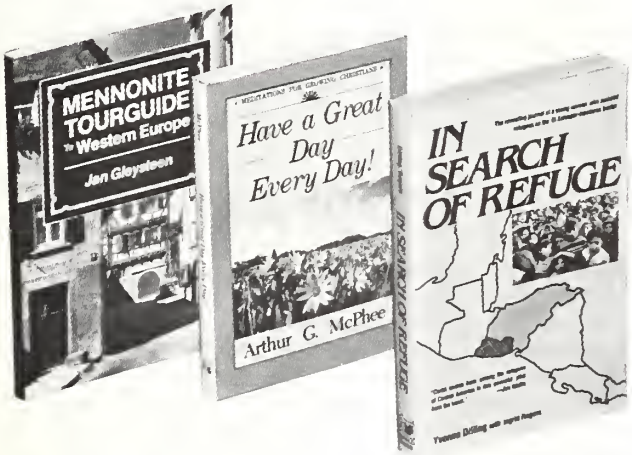


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**Over 100 Honduran villagers** gathered to celebrate the graduation of 22 young women from a five-month sewing workshop. The graduation was also a celebration for the Honduran Mennonite Church and Mennonite Central Committee, which co-sponsored this workshop and others like it in border villages during the last year. The graduating seamstresses learned to make dresses, pants and shirts to clothe their families and help save some of the little money available to these families in this poorest of Latin American countries.

**The allegations that former Nazi doctor** Josef Mengele visited the Mennonite community of Filadelfia, Paraguay, at the end of the December 1982 are based on conversations between several Filadelfia residents and his own sources, Simon Wiesenthal told Mennonite World Conference in a phone interview Feb. 23. Wiesenthal, who has spent much of his life tracing accused Nazi war criminals, admitted that he had no direct knowledge that the Filadelfia residents who were questioned by his associates were Mennonites. He acknowledged that the people Mengele contacted in Filadelfia may not have known the true identity of the visitor. He did not say how his associates in Paraguay established that the identity of the man they questioned residents about was Mengele. Herman Bontrager, secretary for South America and the Caribbean for Mennonite Central Committee, visited with Mennonite leaders in Paraguay Feb. 16-24. He said, "My own discussions reconfirmed for me that Paraguayan Mennonites would not knowingly have anything to do with Mengele. The international attention to this issue during the past year has heightened the awareness among Mennonites generally about the campaign to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, and thus makes it more unlikely than ever that Mennonites would offer haven to him or others." (*Bruce Leichty*, MWC Newsletter)

# 'And When They Shall Ask': a producer's review

*News editor's note: The film "And When They Shall Ask" has been showing in theaters and auditoriums in the western United States over the past four weeks. During January and February, the picture completed a successful run in locations across Canada.*

*Produced by Winnipeg filmmaker David B. Dueck, "And When They Shall Ask" deals with the experiences of the Mennonites in Russia over the past two centuries. Dueck spoke with associate editor Larry Cornies during his (and the film's) visit to Newton, Kan.*

*You've shown "And When They Shall Ask" in many parts of Canada and the United States. Summarize the responses you've had.*

The response that I've had most often is one of appreciation. The people that initially invested money in the film wanted this story told and told in such a way that their children would gain an appreciation for their past. So many people have come to me and simply said, "Thanks." The other response I've had is one of surprise and satisfaction. People were concerned that their story be told well from the cinematic point of view, and I think they've been pleased with the technical aspects of the film.

In Canada, of course, there are many more people who have come from the Soviet Union in this century, and so it is much more of an emotional experience for them. Many times I've sat at the back of the auditorium looking down on the audience and could see the handkerchiefs come out. As one person said, it's a two-handkerchief film. But the impact on the U.S. side has been nearly as great.

*Looking at the film in retrospect, what do you consider to be its most significant accomplishments?*

It has raised the consciousness of the Mennonite community to the medium as such. I think we've helped make our people aware that the film medium can combine the elements of entertainment, information and inspiration.

The opportunity we had to go to the Soviet Union for some of the filming elevated the film to another level. Two years ago it would not have been possible to film the church service in Karaganda because the technology to work in those low-light situations would not have been available to us. However, using high-speed motion picture film, we were able to use professional equipment and sinc sound. To my knowledge, nobody else has done that inside a church in the Soviet Union.

*Filmmaker David Dueck*

*Some people have drawn connections between your filming in the Karaganda church and the Soviet government's closing of that city to some North American tour groups. How do you respond to these suspicions?*

First of all, we sent all of our documents—who we were, where we wanted to go, etc.—to the Soviet ambassador in Ottawa through Governor General Ed Schreyer. The ambassador then sent all of that material to the Soviet Union, then called us and said that it had been sent to Moscow and that we should await a reply. Although we had received permission to go with the Menno Travel tour, we were asking the Soviet government for permission to do the filming.

Well, no reply came. In desperation, about three weeks before we were to go, I called various officials in the Soviet embassy in Ottawa and discussed the matter with them. Finally, one of the press officers asked, "Did you get a refusal?" I said, "No." He said, "Don't quote me, but I would go." So we took that as permission to go.

When we arrived in Moscow, the first question directed at us was, "What do you do for a living?" We had decided ahead of time that we would be up front with them because we had nothing to hide and had sent all of the information ahead. So we simply explained that we were filmmakers and involved in the media.

Our tour guide was with us the whole time except when we were in the church in Karaganda—to have been present there would have symbolized respect of the state for the church—and on a couple of other occasions when we did some personal interviews. But certainly the Soviet officials knew what we were doing and why we were there and had lots of time to intercept us. When we left the Soviet Union, they looked at our suitcases, saw our 40 rolls of film and let us out.

As far as the impact we have had on the church in Karaganda, our information, through sources in Europe who have been in touch with that church since we left, is that it has not damaged the church at all.

**Twenty-six Mennonite singers** will be part of a goodwill tour to European Mennonite churches July 12 - Aug. 8. The mixed choir, made up of singers from Conference of Mennonites in Canada churches, will be under the direction of Bernie Neufeld, minister of music and youth at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg. The tour, led by Helmut Harder, professor of theology and interim president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, was initiated by the CMC and the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Mennonitengemeinden zur geistlichen Betreuung der Umsiedler of West Germany.

**Some 90 exchange visitors,** ages 19 to 30, are expected to come to Canada and the United States in August for a year with the Mennonite Central Committee International Visitor Exchange Program. The young people will come from over 30 countries in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa. MCC is now seeking homes and work arrangements for the 90. The visitors usually live and work in two locations during two six-month terms. If interested contact MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, (717) 859-1151; or MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8, (204) 475-3550.

**"If Canadian peace churches** have nothing to contribute toward peaceful resolution of issues between French and English Canada, do we really have anything to say to parties in dispute in other areas of the globe?" asked Ernie G. Dyck, administrator of the Mennonite House of Friendship in Montreal. Dyck's comments came in the wake of the defeat in Manitoba of an effort to strengthen language rights for the province's French-speaking minority, an issue on which the Mennonite community did not speak with one voice.

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Our understanding is that all tours to Karaganda, whether they be Mennonite or not, have been canceled because of a lack of suitable accommodations. It is true that the hotel we stayed in in Karaganda was different from all the others we stayed in. All the others were tourist hotels where we only mixed with tourists. There, we were with average people. You'd look out of your window and a brawl would be going on downstairs and the paddywagon would come and haul them off. There would be school banquets going on in the hotel and so on.

The tourism cutoff is unfortunate because Karaganda is the place where the most Mennonites are. It had only been opened to visitors about three years earlier. I couldn't believe the scene when we arrived there. As you see in the film, there were about 50 or 60 people, many carrying flowers, that came to meet our bus. It was a very emotional experience.

My wife has a relative there. He is a member of the Communist Party. He said that there were some 26 KGB agents there. You can see them in the film, standing in the background. I don't think that they were watching us as much as they were watching their people. But that's one thing they specialize in—knowing who you are, where you are and what you're doing.

*What will become of "And When They Shall Ask" after you finish your swing through the United States?*

We're exploring the idea of taking it to regular movie theaters and to television. We've had encouragements from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the British Broadcasting Corporation. Then, of course, it will be available through church film rental agencies as well as available for sale on videotape. We already have made the master videotape.

*What film projects are you considering for the future?*

We look upon ourselves as servants. After we did the film on the Mennonites of Paraguay, a number of people told us that we should do this one on the Russian Mennonite experience. It finally sank in and we agreed that, yes, we should. So we're listening to people and asking for guidance. The investors in "And When They Shall Ask" will get a good portion of their money back and they've told us that they'd feel guilty keeping it because it wasn't given under those conditions.

Some options we're thinking about are a feature-length movie on the Anabaptists, especially the Menno Simons era. Lutherans have their film, "Luther." Yet we don't have a film that would illustrate some of our history.

There is a group in California that would love to see a film made on the Chinese or the Amur connection. From a dramatic point of view, compared to the stories you see on television, that story has tremendous possibilities. Then the third possibility is doing a film on the Trek from 1940-48, when people came from the Soviet Union to Germany.

## Environmental concerns occupy U.S. Peace Section

Akron, Pa (MCC U.S.)—Acid rain, crisis pregnancies and alternative service were among agenda items at the semi-annual meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section here April 12-14.

Matters related to energy and the environment continue to be a part of the agenda of the U.S. section, members agreed, during a discussion on acid rain. Art Meyer of the MCC U.S. development education office reported that little is being done to control causes of acid rain. The rain is killing aquatic and plant life in Canada, the United States and Europe.

The section members agreed to report on acid rain developments in its newsletter and to produce study materials for use by congregations.

Executive secretary John Stoner suggested that in keeping with the section's statement "Affirming the Sanctity of Life in Relation to Abortion" they recommend that MCC U.S. support an existing crisis pregnancy service or start a Mennonite crisis pregnancy service.

Evelyn Kreider, member representing MCC Great Lakes, said she favored MCC helping those with unwanted pregnancies. But with obvious frustration she noted that such efforts "are after the fact. We need a larger teaching program in the conferences."

Jim Amstutz of the draft counseling office gave an update on discussions with Selective Service concerning whether, in the event of a draft, MCC could serve as an alternative service employer.

Selective Service has indicated preliminarily that MCC could not, since it requires its workers to sign a statement of faith. MCC has asked an attorney to prepare a legal opinion on the matter, which will be discussed with Selective Service in hopes that MCC and Selective Service can come to an agreement.

The section discussed reports from each program branch of the section staff, including MCC Washington office, Committee on Women's Concerns and Mennonite Conciliation Service. Plans for a peace assembly on "Peace Church Evangelism" were announced. It will be held Nov. 2-3 in Berne, Ind.

**Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship** of Winnipeg, after meeting in homes and rented facilties for 17 years, began a building project on March 11. Members of the fellowship pledged faithfulness to God and each other through hymns, prayer and a responsive reading. Construction is projected to be completed by early fall.

**A letter** from the executive director of the Evangelical Committee for Development Aid (CEPAD) in Nicaragua expresses gratitude for the Bethlehem '83 Resolution on Central America. This resolution called members of Mennonite Church and General Conference churches to prayer and to action, including the commitment to hear "the cries of those suffering in Central America and to respond generously with relief, aid to refugees, development, evangelism and with our individual and congregational witness to the authorities."

**A retreat for parents and adult siblings** of homosexually oriented people will be held the weekend of June 29 - July 1 at Wellspring Retreat Center in Maryland. The retreat will provide a context in which family members of homosexuals can discuss homosexuality in a confidential setting. Resource leaders will be Elsie Steelberg, a Mennonite psychiatrist, and LeRoy Friesen, professor of peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. For more information and registration, contact Bruce Yoder, c/o Hyattsville Mennonite Church, Box 1779, Hyattsville, MD 20788, (301) 927-7327.

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# workers

*Andres*

*Bellm*

*Boldt*

*Dyck*

*Bergen*

*Block*

*M. Friesen*

*R. Friesen*

*Mark Andres*, First Church, Newton, Kan., will begin a one-year Mennonite Voluntary Service term Oct. 10 working with home repair in Kansas City, Kan. A 1983 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., his parents are Harold and Eva Andres of Newton.

*Timothy Bellm*, Christ Church of Lake Forest, Ill., began a two-year MVS term Feb. 5 as development assistant at North of Howard in Chicago. A 1983 graduate of Trinity College, Deerfield, Ill., his parents are Donald and Toni Bellm of Palatine, Ill.

*Susan Bergen*, Nordheim Church, Winnipegosis, Man., has begun a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Kitchener, Ont., working with physically handicapped people in an independent living center. She has studied Christian education at Elim Bible Institute, Altona, Man. Her parents are Cornelius and Catherine Bergen of Winnipegosis.

*Lennard Block*, Harrow (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, has begun a three-year MCC assignment in Kitgum, Uganda, working in water resource development. He has a bachelor's degree in applied science from the University of Waterloo (Ont.). His parents are Harry and Louise Block of Essex, Ont.

*Gail Boldt*, Taylor Ridge, Ill., began a two-year MVS term Jan. 25 as caseworker/coordinator for Victim Offender Reconciliation Program in Fresno, Calif. A 1983 graduate of Trinity College, Deerfield, Ill., her parents are Robert and Betty Boldt of Taylor Ridge.

*Christopher S. Dyck*, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, has begun a two-year MCC assignment in Toronto, where he will work in maintenance at St. Clair-O'Connor Centre.

*Merle Friesen*, Armstrong (B.C.) Bible Chapel, began a one-year MVS term Jan. 1 as a child-care worker in Hutchinson, Kan. Her parents are William and Clare Friesen of Armstrong.

*Rudy Friesen*, Schoenfelder Church, Headingly, Man., has begun a six-month MCC term in Calcutta, India, monitoring the distribution of the large quantities of MCC Canada Food Bank wheat sent to India, and reporting back to donors. From 1955-58 he served with MCC in India and Nepal.

*Ken Funk*, Tiefengrund Church, Laird, Sask., has begun a two-year MCC assignment as program director of Saskatoon Mediation Services. He has a Master of Divinity degree from Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, and a bachelor's degree in theology from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. He is the son of Walter and Irene Funk of Laird.

*John* and *Mary Gaeddert*, North Newton, Kan., will serve as co-chairpersons of the church portion of Bethel College's Centennial Fund Drive.

*Daryl* and *Valerie Griffin*, First Covenant Church, San Jose, Calif., began an 18-month MVS term Nov. 29, 1983, as co-directors of Hope Community Services in Markham, Ill. He is a 1983 graduate of San Jose Bible College, and his parents are Clyde and Martha Griffin of Palo Alto, Calif. Her parents are Frederick Prinz of Needham, Mass., and the

**Revival preaching campaigns** are to be held in cities across the United States, according to the March issue of *Sojourners*. "These preaching campaigns," writes editor Jim Wallis, "will take a biblical and evangelistic approach with a strong emphasis on personal conversion" and will "be designed to call people away from the sins of racism, materialism, violence and the idolatry of the nuclear arms race." Slated to begin in 1985, the revival campaigns will consist of several nights of preaching services in a public place, daytime activities including meetings and workshops and actions that bring attention to the oppression of the poor.

**The purchasing power** of welfare families in the United States declined by one-third from 1970 because states are not increasing aid to the poor, says a report from the House Ways and Means Committee. As of 1982, the poverty level for a family of four was $9,862. The average family of four on Aid to Families with Dependent Children received far less, only $7,442 in welfare payments and food stamps. Only two states, California and Wisconsin, increased their benefits enough to keep up with inflation, according to the report.

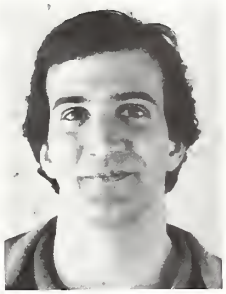
**"As far as we know,** the Soviet Union is the first instance in history where the people who do not believe in God persecute the people who do," says columnist Sydney Harris.

# RECORd

*Funk*

*D. Griffin*

*V. Griffin*


*Hotaling*

*Krahn*

*Kreider*

late Esther Prinz.

*Ed Herr* became claims manager of the health claims department at Mennonite Mutual Aid Feb. 13.

*Stephan Hotaling*, North Seattle Alliance Church, Seattle, began a two-year MVS term March 3 as arts and crafts director at Fresno (Calif.) Boys Club. His parents are Herbert and Kathryn Hotaling of Falls Church, Va.

*Kevin Krahn*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., began a two-year MVS term Feb. 8 in church and community work at Moencopi and Tuba City, Ariz. His parents are Peter and Gwendolyn Krahn of Reedley.

*Robert Kreider* retires this semester from full-time teaching and administration at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He will serve in a part-time, two-year assignment as administrative vice president of the college. In addition he will expand his involvement in historical research and writing.

*Harold* and *Gloria Yoder Nussbaum*, Koinonia Fellowship, Chandler, Ariz., have begun two-year MCC terms in Miami. Gloria will work in a Church World Service refugee resettlement program, and Harold will work in peace education. She has a bachelor's degree in English from Goshen (Ind.) College. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge and a master's degree in music from Arizona State University in Tempe. Harold is a son of George and Viola Nussbaum of Twin Falls, Idaho. Gloria is a daughter of Helen Yoder of Logansport, Ind., and the late Leroy Yoder.

*John Stoesz* became director of the Dallas Peace Center April 1, replacing *John R. Burkholder*, who returns to teaching at Goshen (Ind.) College.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# Resting on Christ's power in the face of drought

*Fremont Regier*

Gaborone, Botswana—In 1982 farmers here produced only 8 percent of Botswana's grain needs. The 1983 crop was even worse. This year during the rainy season the sun beat down unmercifully day after hot day.

The Botswana government has already declared 1984 another year of disaster. In a recent nationwide radio broadcast President Masire declared, "We will continue to depend, as a food deficit country, on the goodwill of the international community for the supply of foodstuffs to the starving people."

I wonder how people maintain their hope. Why do they keep on trying? How can they continue to risk costly inputs of labor, seed, fertilizer and oxen or tractor hire to plow when, even if there is enough rain to sprout the seeds, most years they later burn up in the field?

Nearly half of Botswana's people receive daily rations from the government drought relief program. Some villagers in the Khalahari Desert have little to do but wait for the next government truck to arrive with relief food supplies.

*Villagers gather at a place of prayer in Botswana*

The community development program at Pitseng that Mennonite Central Committee helped initiate six years ago is grinding to a halt. People are too hungry or weak to dig holes for water storage tanks. Villagers do not show up for adult literacy, beekeeping or sewing classes because they have gone to the city searching for work in order to earn money to buy food for their hungry families.

Most development projects are also plagued with the typical problems of dependency, poor management, lack of necessary inputs, poor marketing possibilities and lack of community support and participation. Successful projects are rare.

I am sorely tempted to despair. Arable agriculture is hopeless. Most development projects do not work. Injustice and suffering continue. The more I experience and know, the more discouraged I become.

Robert McAfee Brown in his book *Theology in a New Key* quotes Gustavo Gutierrez, a Latin American theologian: "Knowledge is not the conformity of the mind to the given, but an immersion in the process of transformation and construction of a new world."

Brown goes on to say that the task we have is not to understand the world but to change it. We are not to have a passive intellectual acceptance of the world around us but an ongoing dialectical relationship with it—a relationship of interchange in which both we and the world around us are transformed. For the Christian, says Brown, that circular traffic that is always going on between action and theory is the means by which we attempt to work with God in building "the new heaven and the new earth."

I believe in the new heaven. But in the Southern Africa setting, for me to believe in the new earth sometimes demands, I confess, almost more faith than I can muster.

Brown challenges me again to believe in transformation—the transformation made possible through an encounter with Jesus Christ, who liberates from sin and for freedom.

Many Batswana believe that sin is responsible for the present drought. But is it really sin that prevents rain clouds from forming over Botswana and dropping their precious cargo on our parched lands?

Overgrazing and other human-caused desertification that decrease rainfall could be called sin. I also know that the sins of indifference, greed and selfishness can cause development projects to fail and allow injustice to continue. How do we best proclaim Christ's liberation from sin and for freedom in the context of prolonged drought, failing development projects and basic injustice?

I want to believe again in the aspiration of oppressed people to escape from the destruction that is part of their everyday life. I want to believe that people can take responsibility for their own destiny. I want to believe that there are possibilities for changing the world and that God empowers people to work for justice. I see no other way. It is in the transforming power of Jesus Christ that I must rest. It is the ongoing transforming encounter with him that I seek.

*Fremont Regier, Box 33, Gaborone, Botswana, is Mennonite Ministries representative in Botswana.*

# An Anabaptist childhood

*Helen Rose Pauls*

Gloomily, a friend lamented, "I really missed out. I didn't have an Anabaptist childhood. Did you have an Anabaptist childhood?" he asked.

Puzzled, I tried to define his terms. I've heard a lot of things called Anabaptist, but a childhood? Anabaptist . . . a loving community of believers, caring, sharing, looking out for each other.

I thought back to those carefree childhood days in a closeknit Mennonite village. Was an Anabaptist childhood leaving mother's side during the worship service and sitting with Mrs. Falk and her slipping me some peppermints? Was it old Mrs. Kemmel in her black kerchief pinching my chubby 6-year-old cheeks after church and asking, "Where did you find those rosy apples?" Was it Mrs. Neumann bringing my sister a beautiful doll when she was ill?

Yes, I did have an Anabaptist childhood. It was Mr. Doerksen, the trustee, encouraging me when with trepidation I took on the janitor's job in my teens. It was the joy our whole church body expressed when 15 other teenagers and I were baptized all in the same year. It was the trust Mr. Peters displayed in us by letting us use his hayloft for a youth party and his tractor and trailer for a hayride.

It was the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Wiens, who loved to see a crowd of us come for faspa (lunch) and excitedly exchange new ideas. It was the patience and faith our youth sponsors showed as they let us bumble through endless Christian Endeavor programs so we would have a chance to develop into future leaders. It was Mr. Penner taking me aside and asking, "Have you seriously considered Bible school?" It was the pride and interest the community showed when we went off to college.

*Anabaptist . . . a loving community of believers, caring, sharing, looking out for each other.*

It was the delight and approval they displayed when I brought a certain young man into their midst, hoping for acceptance. And how they affirmed my decision by welcoming him—even though he was from another conference—into the fellowship of communion. It was the love they showed by preparing and serving the wedding feast.

How could a youngster disappoint all those caring people by going astray? We sought their approval and love. Praise God I was privileged to have such a childhood!

And such a childhood need not be unique to village life. Many of our churches practice child dedication where the whole church body acknowledges the new infant and solemnly affirms that they will help and encourage, in any possible way, the young couple in attempting to raise this child for the Lord. (How seriously do we take these declarations? Are we even aware of what children belong to whom?)

There are numerous ways we can help our church body give its youngsters an Anabaptist childhood, but they all begin with our being conscious of our pledge. Making a special effort to learn their names and to greet them is a start. We can ask about school, hobbies and clubs. We can comment on things we hope will interest them. Even a quick hug on a Sunday can make a child's day. We can make it a point to babysit in the nursery and for each other. We can seek out unhappy or hurting children and become special to them.

Some of us are in a position to give youngsters part-time jobs: babysitting, farm work, yard and lawn chores. Meanwhile we can get to know them a bit better. We can plan outings and home parties for those children in our Sunday school class, club or youth group—if we are involved in this work or open our homes to those who are. Hospitality is vital to being a caring community.

Our children are affirmed in their belief in God by interaction with families who have similar beliefs and values. Sometimes we may have to care enough to take a youngster aside and stress self-discipline. It might mean questioning youth regarding their spiritual life or encouraging them to show their commitment through baptism.

We are the body of Christ interacting with each other in a loving fellowship. Let's make those early pledges real to our youngsters.

*Helen Rose Pauls, 21264-80 Ave., Route 11, Langley, BC V3A 6Y3, is a free-lance writer.*

## Our God

*Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

God of life, I worship you.
God of creation, I praise you.
God of resurrection, I celebrate you.
God of revelation, I learn from you.
God of patience, I test you.
God of forgiveness, I come to you.
God of goodness, I want to reflect you.
God of love, fill my life.

# Can splintered Lebanon be saved?

*Marlow Ediger*

During 1952-54 I served as a Mennonite Central Committee teacher and relief worker in the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan. Familiar to me on the West Bank were Old Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem, Hebron and Nablaus.

Near the American University in Beirut was Uncle Sam's, a place to buy hamburgers, milkshakes and Hershey candy bars. Lebanon basically was peaceful and a leading financial center in the Middle East.

I was in Lebanon five times in those years. I remember passing over the mountains when going from Beirut to Baalbek in winter. Many people were skiing in the "Switzerland of the Middle East." Baalbeck had ruins of a temple built to Jupiter.

What has happened to change Lebanon from the early 1950s to the seemingly insurmountable conflicts today? In 1958 Lebanon gave warning that all was not well. Christians held a six to five ratio of members in the Lebanese Parliament. This was made law when France had a League of Nations (World War I) mandate over Lebanon. Christians were the majority religious group in 1943 when France granted independence and left. Today the Moslems are the majority. In 1958 President Eisenhower sent U.S. Marines into Lebanon to maintain peace. The Marines were withdrawn a few months later without solving the problems.

A stream of Palestinian Arab refugees into Lebanon from Israel also upset the population balance. When first coming to the West Bank in 1952, I white-washed caves and homes of Palestinian refugees in Bethany. Many had no jobs. Food and medical care, limited in amount, was supplied by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The Aqaba Refugee Camp housed 40,000 people and Ein Sultan Camp about 38,000 refugees near the Jericho school where I later taught. Clay huts provided their housing.

During the 1967 Six Day War, these Palestinians, among others, became refugees a second time, now having gone east of the Jordan. Jordan lost the West Bank, Syria lost the Golan Heights, and Egypt lost the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip to Israel.

When I was in Jordan, one could use one's passport to travel into Israel but not to return to Jordan. This was true also of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

*A Lebanese boy carries an olive seedling supplied by Mennonite Central Committee.*

The Palestinians virtually had their own state in Lebanon, south of Beirut. Israel invaded in June 1982 to destroy the Palestine Liberation Organization. Periodically, the PLO had fired rockets into Israeli villages. Heavy bombing of West Beirut, where the PLO were then located, by Israel in U.S.-manufactured planes, led to the evacuation of the PLO.

The civil war actually began in 1975. Syria, an Arab nation, moved 30,000 troops into Lebanon that year to prevent it becoming a Palestinian state and to prevent factional disputes among the inhabitants. In southern Lebanon Israel found an ally in Major Haddad and his troops representing a Maronite Christian faction. Israel supported this group to prevent northern Israeli villages from being shelled by the Palestinians.

The multinational peace troops from the United States, France, Italy and England entered Beirut in late 1982 after a massacre of Palestinian refugees in two camps in or near Beirut.

U.S. troops have been targets of the Druzes, located on the Shouf Mountains. The Druzes, a minority group, are led by Walid Jumblatt. Druzes do not want the kind of government Lebanon had prior to 1975. They believe that the Amin Gemayel government represents only the Maronite Christian Phalange group.

Nor are the Maronite Christians united. Separate from the present government is Suleiman Franjieh and his Maronite followers. Franjieh was president of Lebanon from 1970-1976. Franjieh's separation was due to deaths in his family from the hit-squad followers of Gemayel. Franjieh's followers believe they lack proper representation in the government and are allied with the Moslems.

The Sunni Moslems are led by Saeb Salaam, who has been prime minister (not president) six different occasions. Rashid Karami is also a leader of Sunni Moslems and served as Lebanese prime minister four times. By law the president must be a Christian, and it is the seat of power.

The Shiite Moslems are the most numerous of any faction now, whereas the Christians had the largest population in 1943. The Shiites also do not feel loyalty to the present government. The Shiites, among other places, live in the poorer areas of Beirut. Iran, under the Ayatollah Khomeini, is a Shiite nation.

Many separate religious groups and loyalties are in Lebanon. How might all of these factions become one nation?

1. Palestinian Arabs need a homeland or state. Palestinians once had their own country, Palestine, which is now Israel. In 1947 the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish state, now Israel, and an Arab nation for the Palestinians.
2. Syria might be convinced to vacate Lebanon if they received the Golan Heights, lost to Israel in 1967.
3. Lebanon needs to accommodate all factions and groups rather than be a stronghold of Phalange Maronite Christians. The Shiite Moslems, the Druzes, the Sunni Moslems, the Palestinians, the Phalange Maronites and the Maronites led by Suleiman Franjieh need just representation.
4. All nations involved in the Lebanese dispute must receive justice in resolving differences. These nations include Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Arabs who have no nation of their own.

*Marlow Ediger is professor of education at Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, MO 63501.*

# Lifestyle choices

*Mildred Schroeder*

It would be a good exercise for each of us to examine our lifestyle from time to time. The word "lifestyle" is fairly new.

Doris Longacre in her book *Living More With Less* says the dictionaries in the early '70s didn't even list the word and that probably it was a word we began needing because the way we were living was changing so quickly.

Our family now consists of David and myself, our university-age son Alan, Ernie and Lynette Wiebe (our daughter) and our grandchildren Rebecca, David and Daniel. As I think about the lifestyle of our family unit, I find many changes from a generation ago. However, there are also many life standards that have remained. Three of the important standards for us could be summarized in these categories: sharing, conserving and recycling.

*Three generations work together at recycling used materials into a beautiful "new" quilt.*

About four years ago, on a Sunday afternoon when we were sitting with our children and chatting about the pros and cons of sharing, our dream of a shared, intergenerational home began. We realized that many things need not be duplicated even if we had two households. For instance, we could share a laundry, a lawn mower, a freezer and various electrical appliances. We could also manage with one less car. Not only could things be shared, but also responsibilities. My husband and I were finding it hard to care for the yard and garden, but with a son-in-law who loves to putter outdoors and work the soil and a son whose strong back is always ready to help we can enjoy it with the rest of the family. Caring for the grandchildren is a pleasure. When Dave is away on his many assignments, I know I am not alone and have a helping hand nearby at all times. We also share many friends and have many meals together with a table of 12 or more.

Since my father lived with us almost 25 years of our married life, we find he has greatly influenced our lifestyle. He stressed conservation. He never threw away wood, string, cardboard, etc. because they could surely be used to make something, such as toys and puzzles, or for repairing things. Now we tend to do the same. For him a garden was a must, and the bigger the better.

We try to conserve paper by not duplicating magazines and newspapers. Our main interest, though, is the conservation of fuel, so we try to utilize the sun for passive solar heat. Our home has large south windows which let in the winter sunshine. The walls are superinsulated. We enjoy a warm draft-free home, and our fuel bills have been cut drastically.

Our family has a weakness (or is it a strength?). We shop at thrift shops or garage sales for many of our needs. It also gives us pleasure to pass things back to the thrift shop when they can still be used by someone else. Making quilts from secondhand clothes is considered a craft, and familiar recycled apparel makes for many conversations. We try to encourage each others' gifts in creativity, and so the recreation room has been converted into a shop for our daughter's stained-glass hobby. There is still room for the hobbies and projects yet to be discovered and enjoyed by other members of our household.

As we grow and change and discover new areas of caring and sharing, we can look for success and fulfillment, keeping our vision alive as exemplified in the sharing community of Christ.

*Mildred Schroeder, 745 Coventry Road, Winnipeg, MB R3R 1B8, shared the above in their church newsletter, "The Grapevine," November 1983. It is reprinted by permission.*

# People need people

*Trudy Froese*

People need people
no matter how complete they appear to be
within themselves,
no matter how full of goodness and God.
There is no completeness
apart from merging one with another.
There is no completeness
apart from caring
and giving
and loving.
There is no completeness
apart from sharing lives
and learning from each other.
Completeness is not finality.
It is continual expansion of the soul.

# MEDITATION

## How do you spend it?

Our son—a senior in high school—came home and announced he needed $7.80 to reserve a cap and gown for graduation. In addition, he said, if he wanted an extra tassel for a keepsake he needed another $1.50. I told him I would give him money for the cap and gown, but the decision on the tassel was up to him. He thoughtfully contemplated for several minutes, then asked for the $7.80. His decision made, he remarked, "People are starving in the world and my biggest decision is whether or not I should keep my tassel."

It could be an interesting experiment if we would make our monetary decisions in light of Christ's admonition to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. Something like the tassel may be only a small item. I suggest that more irresponsible decisions regarding money are made in small rather than in large matters. When we are dealing with a large sum of money, the decision many times is an important one. We are more likely then to consider carefully the ramifications for ourselves and for other people.

We have become so accustomed, however, to the dictates of society and commercialism that we spend money every day without thinking of implications or consequences. The philosophy is that this is the way it is done and we really don't have a choice. But on most occasions we do have a choice. Our contributions for relief and other mission purposes could be increased considerably if we would exercise our freedom of choice and give that money to MCC or other church agencies.

*Janice Pauls*

## A morning meditation

My 3-year-old woke up during my routine race with the clock. Usually, when it's my day to go to work, I catch an early bus, leaving the house before my husband and daughter have awakened. But today she appeared at her door early, dragging her shredded chenille blanket and called out "Mommy" in her high, half-asleep voice. I guided those flannel pajamas back into bed and she nestled in obediently, thumb in place, her body curled up like the newborn she shadows in those early, cozy, predawn hours.

"I need you, Mommy." The words pushed sleepily past her thumb and she thrust her arm out of the covers to wrap around my neck. Stroking her brow, I assured her that we all needed each other . . . even the dog . . . and I drank in deeply this timeless moment.

"Do God blesses," she commanded, and I began the list of people in her life with as much of a drone as it took to lull her back to sleep for one more hour.

"God, I need *you* this morning. I need your presence to be as real as a stroke on my hassled brow. Give me the wisdom to be still long enough, on the bus, at coffee break, during the evening family hours, to affirm your companionship and your love that is as deep and as full as a mother's."

*Julie Trnka*

# CONTENTS

How do you celebrate and affirm Christian families today? Should we emphasize mothers, fathers, children, grandparents, uncles and aunts? Family today is taking on new shapes and meanings.

If family means mother, father and the proverbial average of less than two children (a nuclear family), this species is becoming rare. Some larger cities say 4 percent of their family units fit this category.

But if family means we need close-knit units of compassionate caring, that need is still universal. And we need to promote values which build such units.

Our prayer is for this issue to help us squarely face some of today's challenges to our Christian homes.


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# EDITORIAL

## Christian values face challenges

When was the last time you heard someone say, "As the home goes, so goes the nation"? Leaders are scared to say this today because of the way so many homes are going.

There seems to be a new set of values among us that sound OK, but Christians have either been afraid to spell them out or we have not yet come to understand their long-term implications.

1. *Regular sexual satisfaction is every human's right.* If God created us sexual beings, this sounds perfectly natural. But is there a place for self-denial, delayed gratification of human desires and a possibility that there are human experiences that can exceed or replace actual sexual exercise (in its genital sense)? Has sexual experience been promoted beyond proportion in the context of total relationships?

2. *Intimacy is a universal essential for human maturing.* Again, it seems OK. We are born out of intimacy and need closeness in a world that wants to translate all of us into number codes. But do we know an intimacy that goes beyond feelings connecting with feelings? Are we able to find the "soul thirsts for God" (Psalm 42) level of connection?

3. *Openness and flexibility are keys to survival in a fast-changing world.* There is truth here. A closed mind soon finds itself embattled in today's knowledge explosion. But is there a place also for closure, a "drawing of the line" within a reasonable definition of reality and saying, "Here I stand, I can do no other"? Does not the nature of personhood and peoplehood demand also places of bonding and commitment?

4. *Institutions are today regarded as the enemy; the essence of freedom and life is personalism.* Sounds super. God created people, not buildings or organizations. And it is exciting to note in Revelation's description of the New Jerusalem that there is no temple. "Now the dwelling of God is with his people. . ." (21:3). But is total deinstitutionalization relevant and wise for us? Individualized independence seems to contribute at least as much to depersonalized non-being as any obscurity created by preset roles. There probably is no greater exclusivism than a myopic self-actualization. Could it be that institutions are not the culprits so much as our abuse of the same? Can we really exist in communities without roles and institutions?

I realize that means we must deal more creatively with stereotypes about monogamy, about sexuality, about family and about faith development.

5. *Belongingness and accountability—to and for others—seem to be regarded as unnecessary and unfair baggage in a mobile world.* It is hard to care even for church members who are here today and gone across the country by tomorrow. Fritz Pearls, the Gestaltian psychologist, popularized a saying that can be freeing but also deceiving: "I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I, and if by chance we find each other, it's beautiful" (Forrell and Lazareth, eds., *Crisis In Marriage*, p. 9). But isn't there a contradiction in "finding ourselves" when unity demands communion? Isn't the derelict cry of Jesus on the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken. . . ?" (Mark 15:34) a universal phenomenon when we come up against our true selves?

6. *Children seem to be a questionable blessing best postponed and possibly avoided.* It sounds sensitive to say we won't have children till we can afford them and can take time for them. But is our attitude toward children reflecting our own insecurity about ourselves? Today's children (see recent covers of *Quest* and *Psychology Today*) fear they may never grow up. Nuclear jitters are making people under 30 more pessimistic about the future than ever before. What do our attitudes about children say to such fears?

The Bible says children are a "heritage from God" (Psalm 127) and "to such belongs the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). Would we not speak a clearer message of hope to the world and to children if we gladly have them and nurture them as gifts entrusted to us from God for a time?

*Summary.* Covenants, compassion, confession and forgiveness are needed as much as ever in our families—nuclear, single-parent, intentional, extended, church. With these elements we all have reason to hope and live in expectation of "greater things than these" (John 1:50; 5:20). *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

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## Inside this issue:

The faith journey
The other side of Perspective '84
Let's add more compassion

# The faith journey

*Eleanor Loewen*

We all know that a body needs certain elements to grow and stay healthy. Books and experts give no end of suggestions as to what parents and society should do to make sure that a person has the right food, right exercise, right schooling and right emotional environment. We also know that physical, social and emotional growth cannot be forced or rushed. And there are different expectations of children and adults.

In the spiritual realm, however, we are less understanding and less patient. Too often stress is placed on conversion, baptism and church membership. What happens before and after these decision-making points? The faith journey is overlooked.

In Jesus' relationship with his disciples, as described in Mark, we notice that the disciples went through various stages of becoming disciples. They were first called to experience what this new leader had to offer and what he expected of his followers. Then as they walked together they were told, through stories, parables, miracles, what Jesus expected of people who follow the teachings of this new way. The disciples' faith journey took them from this time of nurture and experience to a time of searching. Complete commitment did not come until after Christ's ascension and their reception of the Holy Spirit.

Like the disciples, we are on a faith journey. The journey begins with experiences in the home and church. The Bible passage used most often to emphasize this point is Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Notice the action words, "*Impress* them (commandments) on your children. *Talk* about them when you *sit* at home and when you *walk* along the road, when you *lie* down and when you *get up*. *Tie* them as symbols on your hands and *bind* them on your foreheads. *Write* them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."

The point is activity—experience in as many ways as the creative mind directs. In the midst of the congregation children, youth and adults observe what the Christian faith is. They observe faith in action. We cannot determine what another person's faith is, nor can we give another person faith, but we can be faithful in sharing our faith with others.

Through many models and examples children grow up in faith, come to under-

stand it and then respond with their own commitment to Jesus Christ. We must remember, however, that this commitment will come on God's timetable, not ours.

The second stage of presenting the faith story is through instruction or affiliation (belonging). Learning the stories of their families, heroes of faith and the congregation's story is essential for faith. It is part of developing the understanding necessary before deciding whether or not to accept the faith of this group. Therefore, in Mennonite congregations it is important to include stories of the Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage and stories of faith as found in the Bible.

Colossians 3:16 tells us that instruction and affiliation happen as people teach and admonish each other with all wisdom and as the group sings psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. The faith story can be shared through teaching, art and singing—opportunities for experiencing awe, wonder and mystery. It is also significant that Paul says we are to teach and admonish each other. Too often education and admonition are one-way communication—from the teacher or minister to the child/young person/adult. When and where do we take the time to learn from the person beginning the Christian faith journey?

At this stage, children, young people or adults may make a decision to commit their lives to the Christian way of life as experienced and taught in that congregation. Many people are relieved when a faith commitment (conversion and possibly baptism) takes place before too many questions and doubts arise. Faith may be more accepted then but the danger is that these people forever stay at the "milk" stage in their spiritual nourishment.

Hebrews makes the point (5:13-6:1a) that "anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil." It is noteworthy that people should train themselves. The training in distinguishing good from evil is not imposed by other people. Westerhoff describes this time as the "searching faith" stage.

Christian experience includes acquiring special skills and abilities through actual experience (with considerable trial and error). Unfortunately, many people in our congregations are uncomfortable with others—especially young people—who are going through the searching and questioning stage. This may be because they have not dared to question or were taught not to question what their parents, pastors or elders taught them.

We are fortunate that we have programs like Mennonite Voluntary Service, Mennonite Central Committee, camps, etc., where special abilities and skills can be developed. Many congregations are also beginning to realize that youth need to learn what church membership means through involvement in congregational programs and decision-making processes.

prepare God's people for works of service. These are the people who are not threatened by other people questioning their own faith but patiently teach and witness, encouraging others to become mature in Christ.

When people have developed a mature concept of what their call to discipleship means, they will want to put their faith into personal and social action. They are willing to stand up for what they believe, even against the community of their nurture. Thus we have people who do not have black and white answers on issues such as abortion, justice, divorce and remarriage, ordination of women, etc. We also have people who do not reg-

**Discipleship, like the rest of life, is a process of maturing. A variety of developmental tasks reflects the stages of our faith journey.**

At this stage some people may appear fickle, giving their lives to one ideology after another, sometimes in rapid succession. But that is how we learn commitment.

Searching faith requires that we explore alternatives to our earlier understanding of what it means to be Christian. This is the time of bringing inherited faith and personalized faith together. This is why we need our colleges, Bible schools, and special youth and young adult events such as Great Trek (Canadian), Perspective '84 (General Conference) and the Bethlehem '83 youth conference. These institutions and programs provide settings and opportunities for people to ask questions under the guidance of Christian disciples.

When people have gone through the searching faith stage, they come to a faith that is their own, and they can be disciples in a fuller sense. These are the people referred to in Ephesians 4:11-13 who become the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who

ister for the draft, people who participate in peace walks, people who live celibate lives for the sake of their faith.

As disciples we can never predict with certainty what Christ's leading will be in each new situation. But we must teach ourselves and allow others to teach us what discipleship means for us, and then we will not fear the changes and new situations thrust upon us.

These stages are not cut and dried with movement from one stage to another in a nice neat pattern. The faith journey is fluid with movement from one stage to another, possibly including several stages at a time. Experiences and faith stories shared within Christian community help us face and process new faith questions, leading to a personal understanding of what Christian discipleship means for each of us at particular points in our lives. May it be said of each of us, as was said of Christ, that we increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and each other—people who were maturing spiritually. •

*T. Wayne Rieman*

# New openness to the Spirit

"As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1).

Those who are concerned with the life of the spirit, with the inner life, are discovering our times to be paradoxical. They provide unprecedented opportunities and great obstacles.

**There is a new openness to things of the Spirit.** Causal factors are many: some of the old gods are dying; some cultural idols have fallen; a measure of disillusionment with the affluent life has set in; there is increasing recognition that science and technology will not save us but may destroy us; the search for meaning is unabated. Sometimes it is pursued quietly, sometimes frantically. Finding meaning is one of the great issues of our day.

These people are inside and outside the church. I meet them at coffee shops, truck stops, auctions, sports events and on airplanes. I meet them also in churches, schools of prayer and spiritual retreats. There is a new sensitivity to the transcendent. Some awareness of the beyond, of the realm of the spirit beyond material things, is apparent.

People want to learn to pray. Churches have done too little to teach members to pray.

John Updike, contemporary novelist, confesses that he engages in public worship because it helps to "make the invisible visible." Ah yes, our culture tends to deny transcendence though our souls pant for God as the deer thirsts for streams of running water.

Science is too limited. It deals only with the observable, with what can be quantified, weighed and measured. Our hearts know there is more. We intuit things invisible. Our spirits reach for the Great Spirit and we are met by One who searches for us.

Though science, technology and materialism are dominant dimensions of the contemporary scene, their reign is not supreme. Discerning individuals do not yield to the imperialistic claims made by them. There is something beyond—always. Faith, forgiveness, love, joy, grace, mercy, tender care, kindness, goodness, peace, hope, aspiration, suffering, pain, humility, self-control—these spiritual realities simply slip through the meshes of the scientific method. Technology bypasses them as if they were of no consequence. Computers with all their sophistication cannot compute them.

God, like a midwife, delivers us to be born anew again and again.

Openness, opportunities and challenges abound. The times are ripe for a spiritual ministry to make real the new order of the Spirit, to enable all to see the image of God in the face of every human, to be spiritual midwives helping every child of God to be born again and again and again, to practice God's presence in every present, to teach people to pray without ceasing.

All of God's children are spirit-endowed creatures. We are fearfully and wonderfully made. Our ministry is to assist others to recognize the mysteries of soul-spirit-psyche-mind as the essence of humanness. We are called to nurture the life of the soul in a culture that treats people as objects, as disposable things, as pawns in a socioeconomic system. We have Good News to share in a world of bad news.

**We face grave obstacles in the spiritual ministry.** (1) The spiritual realm is vague. For all our biblical verbiage, kingdom allusions and prayer, the spiritual realm is simply unreal for many devout Christians. We are "this worldly."

2. Science, technology and materialism reduce reality to what can be seen, weighed and consumed. Spirituality is foreign to us as a rule. Capitalism encourages breaking the most spiritual of the commandments.

3. Materialism abounds. Many devout church members believe with the pagans that life consists in the abundance of things.

4. Science and technology are deemed gods. We expect them to save us. Science and technology have become imperialistic and pretentious god figures.

5. Many church leaders shy away from second birth possibilities. Spiritual birth is the glorious possibility. The Eternal One seeks to give eternal life now. God, like a midwife, helps us to be born again and again. Spirit gives birth to spirit.

These obstacles beset us. They are tough and persistent. But they are not insurmountable.

Eternal life is a present possibility. It is not something we get when we die. It begins when the Eternal One is permitted into our lives. It is the spiritual life waiting to be born in you today by his Spirit. •

*This article was written by T. Wayne Rieman, Route 2, Box 3, North Manchester, IN 46962.*

# There is always more to do

*Barbara Metzler*

A. Grace Wenger grew up in Lancaster County, Pa., on a farm that had belonged to her mother's family "from the beginning." The school she attended was on ancestral land and the family cemetery was within walking distance.

The youngest of five girls and member of a family that was always the first to church, Grace, 64, grew up knowing who she was. "I was myself. I was the younger sister in the family, the pupil in school, the responsible person who took leadership when it came my way and didn't usually stop to ask if I could.

"It was always difficult for me to understand people who felt they didn't know who they were," Grace said, sitting in the living room of the Bareville house that has been home since she was 9 years old. "I had a firm sense of identity. I'm firmly rooted in the past." And when she does forget who she is, she added, she has four sisters who tend to remind her.

Grace Wenger taught English for 39 years. She began her teaching career in a one-room schoolhouse with 50 students in eight grades. "It was the hardest job I ever had," she said. It was also her first attempt at teaching English as a second language to Pennsylvania Dutch students.

Grace's teaching career took her to the public elementary schools for three years, then to Eastern Mennonite High School in Virginia for 13 years and to Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School for an additional 10 years and finally Millersville (Pa.) State College, where she retired at the age of 60 because "I got tired of grading papers."

She left behind her a record of concern. At Millersville she became aware of the great number of inner-city students admitted under equal opportunity programs who were flunking out primarily because of an inability to comprehend standard English. She took a year's leave of absence to relearn basic linguistics to teach English as a second language and became one of the first people to develop materials for second dialect teaching. As a result, Grace was given a Commonwealth Teaching Award in 1977.

The Commonwealth Award was a surprise. Many colleagues had told her it was an irrational choice to give up teaching the more prestigious literary courses in order to teach on the lower level. "My Christian commitment made me feel a concern that a lot of good and capable colleagues didn't feel," she said. Ironically, she added, she would never have received a teaching award if she had continued in conventional teaching.

**Grace Wenger says the Mennonite Church has helped her to make contributions she is proud of.**

Unexpected successes seem to be a part of Grace Wenger's life. When she began to design a quilt for the MCC relief sale in Harrisburg, Pa., last spring, she had no idea that her design illustrating the 300th anniversary of Mennonites in the United States would bring a record $6,500. "I've taught English for 39 years and I seem to be going down in history as the maker of a quilt," she commented with a touch of humor.

Grace was also instrumental in giving

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life to Menno Housing, a non-discriminatory rental agency in Lancaster. That too began as a hope to make life better for people who were struggling with the norm. Grace became aware of discriminatory practices in housing as a result of observing adopted nieces and nephews from Zaire who were trying to establish homes in Lancaster. She and her sister found places for them, but she wasn't satisfied.

"I discovered how prejudiced people in the area were about renting to blacks, and I was concerned about people who didn't have white people to help them find places." Menno Housing was born when she met a Quaker who was beginning an organization elsewhere that was similar to what she had in mind. He met with her and several other people in 1967, and Menno Housing was organized as a profit-sharing corporation with beginning investments of $4,650.

Records from 1980 show that Menno Housing now has assets of $575,899, 59 properties and over 100 stockholders. But again she isn't satisfied. "There's much more that could be done. We ought to have much more invested." The local churches, she feels, are not as involved as they might be. "It's not quite as exciting to them as something being done overseas."

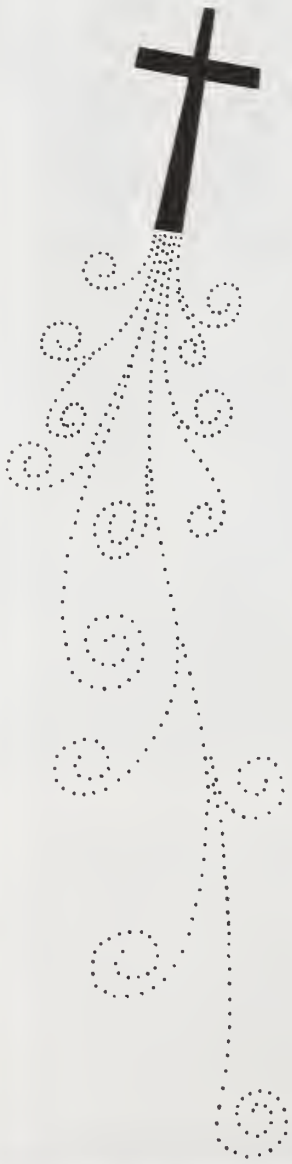
Yet she considers Menno Housing one of her most significant accomplishments. The Mennonite Church, she said, has helped her to make contributions she is proud of.

"Being part of the church extends my ministry beyond what I would have been able to do individually," she said. She appreciates the Mennonite Church's strong emphasis on social service combined with respect for the Bible. "The concern for human need has become important to me," she said, "and I get excited about being a part of a group that has a worldwide vision and that's concerned about need and justice."

Grace's devotion to ideas and to bettering the lives of others is unswerving. "Whatever I was doing I was completely devoted to," she said, explaining that she could never understand how her colleagues could manage both a family and a career. "To have to split my energies like that would be very difficult."

Grace has a lecture she gives about women of velvet and women of steel, taken from a line by Stephen Vincent Benet: "The velvet sheathing the steel demurely." "The old Anabaptist women were extremely strong characters," she said, adding, "I think we sort of lost that when women were supposed to be submissive." The poetry line is from "Portrait of a Southern Lady," she explained. "She played the soft lady, but she managed the whole plantation." *A Meetinghouse article in the series which introduces people representative of the various Mennonite groups. Grace Wenger represents the Mennonite Church. Barbara Metzler, 2040 Mount Vernon Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130, is a free-lance writer.* •

# Coalition for Christian defense

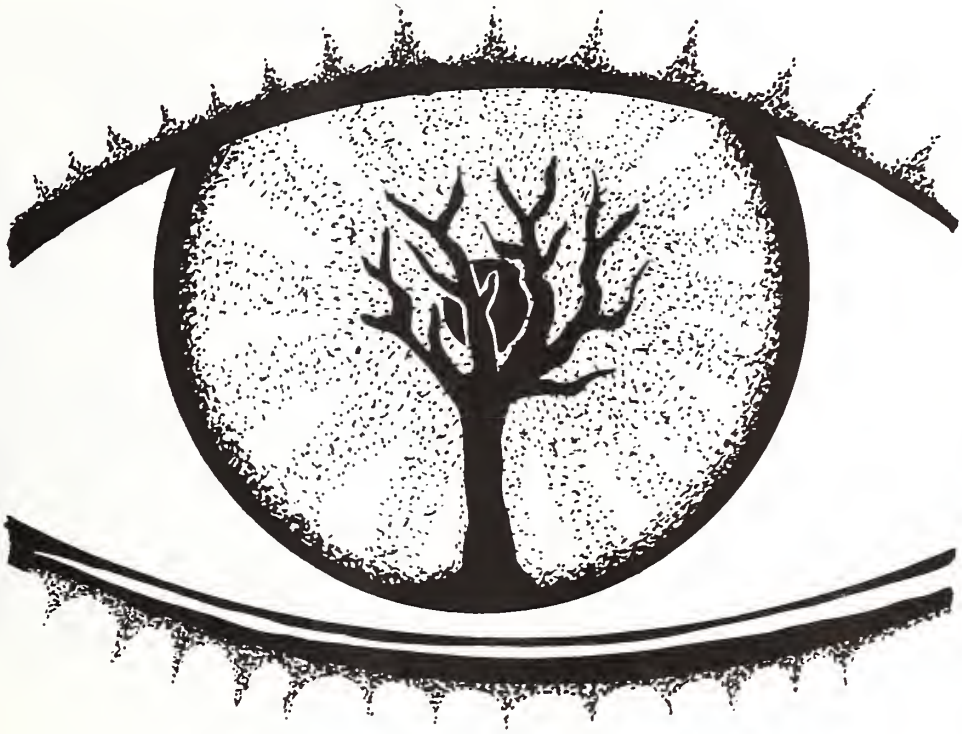


*Ruth Naylor*

Let us build an arsenal
To fortify God's army
Here on earth.
Let us stock it well
With anti-ballistic missiles
Which promise and deliver the ability
To shoot down fear—
Fears that attack us
And reduce us to savagery
Or kill our spirits
While the body fights
Senselessly,
Destroying civilization
And creative hope.
Let us aggressively build
Our inner defenses—
Learning to negotiate with human nature
And implementing honest solutions
To conflict.
Let us call together forces
Of confidence
In our leader
Recognizing that he alone
Is the Creator
Of peace.
Forgiven for past failure,
Let us walk courageously ahead
Confronting the enemy—
Sharing our refuge,
The Kingdom of Peace,
With others
Who have Love's heart to fight
Against fear
And death.

# Wisdom: submitting to order

*Ted VanderEnde*



To be wise is to love God's order (shalom). From God's creative power flows harmony. He turns the void and the formlessness of the vast darkness into delightful fullness. Wherever God's order is perceived and honored there is wisdom, there is life. Wherever that order is denied and broken there is folly, there is death. The Corinthian church, lacking wise leaders (1 Corinthians 6:5), is characterized by unrest, unruliness and brokenness. In addressing this problem Paul states that "God is not a God of disorder but of peace" (14:33). A divided and individualistic church is not a testimony to the created order of God.

To the wise of the Ancient Near East nature implied this wise Creator. The obvious balance of nature was a constant reminder of God's design, not only illustrating certain points but revealing beauty and order to verify order in the social and moral realm. Psalm 104, a delightful wisdom/creation poem, describes a scene in nature and the intricate interplay of each part of creation. The springs in the ravines water the beasts in the field and make trees to grow which are there for birds to nest in. This dynamic interplay involves humankind, for creation provides the setting for work and recreation. It is this harmony, this ecology, the absence of chance, the order of it all that makes him say, "O Lord my God, you are great, you are clothed with splendor and majesty. . . . How many are your works, O Lord? In wisdom you made them all, the earth is full of your creatures." To ponder nature leads us into worship.

Significantly, in Proverbs we find a great poem in honor of the Creator who called Wisdom to his side before beginning his marvelous work. The work of making order out of void and formlessness is a work done in wisdom and utter skill (Proverbs 8:22-31). In contrast, sin and its consequences creates ruin and is the work of fools (Jeremiah 4:22, 23).

The wise used the happenings in nature to teach wisdom to the naive. Look to the ant and become diligent. Look to the eagle and be amazed. Look to the rain and the snowstorm and become humble. In like manner Jesus, as a wisdom teacher, used nature in his teachings. In the Sermon on the Mount we hear him speak about salt and light, moth and rust, the birds of the air and the lilies in the field, dogs and pigs, grapes and thornbushes. All help to make clearer the spiritual and moral order of the kingdom of God. Wisdom theology is creation theology, and creation theology glories in God's dynamic order, which verifies and undergirds the social and economic, the moral and spiritual order which God created as much as the order in nature. Thus as basic principles govern the physical realm and make science such a potential delight, so social, economic, psychological, spiritual and moral principles are at the root of harmonious living that makes all of life potentially delightful. To be wise is to have life. "My child, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck" (Proverbs 3:21, 22).

"God is not a God of disorder but of peace." It is the Creator's order that the Christian loves and looks for, submits himself or herself to. The wisdom from above submits (James 3:17) to all that honors God's shalom. The Greek *hupotasso* implies this thought, to be under (hupo) order (tasso). The believer defends this order by a verbal witness and in wise living. What God originally intended, the wise defends. The fear of Yahweh as the only true God, a love for the family, the sacredness of the sexual union between the married man and woman, the beauty of creation, wise leadership, the attributes of kindness and generosity and all that supports righteousness.

The principles of God's order pour forth from the Bible's wisdom literature. These are not outdated customs from a primitive era, invalid and without merit for our sophisticated scientific day. To the contrary, in an age of disorder we need this wisdom even more to give witness to the Creator's intricate and lasting design for life. *Second article in a series on wisdom*

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# The other side of Perspective '84

*Wayne Trussell and Paul Howard*

The two articles on Perspective '84 (March 13 issue) expressed the positive aspects of the conference. We feel it our responsibility to relate the promotion of neutrality concerning Christian ethics and moral standards that was expressed there.

There were statements like the following: (1) Homosexuality, if monogamous and entered into with a covenant between two people, is acceptable to God as an alternate Christian lifestyle. (2) God has approved my past. (3) The Bible is a good book but only a good book. It is not absolute except to love God and one's neighbor. All else is left to individual interpretation. (4) Inclusive language means to include God's feminine character. The closing prayers of the conference were to "Mother God." We believe these statements promote the neutrality of Christian ethics and moral standards.

Justification of homosexuality was given as a scientifically proven, inborn orientation caused by a hormonal imbalance. This means some people have no choice. If we believe God is our maker, then we must believe he understands our makeup and our sinful tendencies. That is why he has set specific guidelines and standards for us to live by. We believe God speaks clearly to the issue of homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22, Romans 1:24-32 and 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 all testify that homosexuality is detestable, unnatural and an abomination to God. Such shall not inherit the kingdom of God. This leaves no room for individual interpretation or scientific justification.

The statement "God has approved my past" implies there is no need for repentance. Jesus started his ministry on earth by saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17).

In reference to the statement on absolutes, if the Bible is not absolute, it has no authority. If the Bible is not authoritative, then there can be no unity among believers and it leaves us open to the whims of society. The absolute to love God and one's neighbor shows only the loving attribute of God. What of the holiness of God? In God's holy eyes there are absolute rights and wrongs. In loving our neighbors we must not compromise God's standards by accepting the whims of society.

*Palmer Becker, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church at Richmond, B.C., checks his schedule to see if there's time for extra meetings.*

The idea of inclusiveness is not wrong in itself. But to bring God into a human battle for equality is an insult to his deity. Perhaps we need to re-educate ourselves as to who and what God is. If we are to take Perry Yoder's suggestion and yield to the model of Jesus, then let us know God as Jesus did.

One of the most disturbing aspects we found at the conference was the disposing of biblical absolutes and replacing them with the theology of humanism. Humanism is nothing less than seeking knowledge and values through people rather than God. Francis A. Schaeffer in *The God Who Is There* writes, "It is imperative that Christians realize the conclusions which are drawn as a result of the death of absolutes." We cannot allow society to shape our values. We must continually strive to be Christlike. 1 John 2:6 says, "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did."

*Wayne Trussell and Paul Howard are members of Calvary Mennonite Church, 6711 S. Lone Elder Road, Aurora, OR 97002.*

*Ron Kraybill (right) asked three Perspective '84 participants what the conference had meant to them. Were they ready to go forth and build a new creation in hope?*

# Holy Spirit ministries

*Donald E. Yoder*

Evangelism and church planting are inseparable sides of the same coin. Evangelism is the extension of God's grace through believers sharing the life of Christ with others. Church planting is the gathering together into a discipleship group those who respond in faith to God's grace. Both are important ministries of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord said, "Go and make disciples of all nations. . . . And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

**The Holy Spirit and urban mission.** As secretary for church planting and evangelism for the General Conference Mennonite Church and consultant in church planting for the Mennonite Board of Missions, I've had opportunities to observe the Holy Spirit at work in the lives of committed people and congregations in a variety of church planting ministries.

The Sunday evening following last Thanksgiving, several church planting and evangelism reference council members drove to central Los Angeles to worship with the Family Mennonite Church. This congregation began in the home of the Perez family several years ago. The congregation soon became too large and moved to the one-car garage behind the Perez home. Next they enlarged it to a two-car size. On warm Sundays the garage is filled to capacity, the door is opened and worshipers are seated on chairs in the driveway.

We were warmly welcomed by several members and were ushered into the meeting place. It was chilly because the only source of heat was a small electric heater in the back corner.

It was not long until the room was filled to capacity with people seated on the steps of the speaker's platform in order to use every available space. It was cool and damp outside, so they did not open the garage door.

As we lifted our voices, hearts and hands in worship with the Family Mennonite Church that evening, we were surrounded by the warmth and love that can only be generated by the Holy Spirit in the lives of his people. The chill of the room was soon replaced by the warm glow of the Spirit.

Pastor Isaac ministered to all as he shared in word and song under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As we together affirmed that "Jesus is Lord," we experienced the fulfillment of his promise, "On this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

**The Holy Spirit and ethnic mission.** The Sunday before last Christmas, I had another opportunity to experience the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the lives of committed people planting the church. San Jose and Santa Clara, Calif., are in the heart of the silicon valley. A number of Southeast Asian refugees have settled there and have found employment in the large computer industries.

Adam and Jeanette Liu and their four sons moved to Santa Clara from Taiwan in early 1981. Adam had served as a pastor and conference worker with the Fellowship of Mennonite Churches in Taiwan for a number of years. Sensitive to the Holy Spirit, the Lius began a home Bible study with Chinese refugees from Southeast Asia. Soon they were ministering to the needs for assistance in health care, housing, employment and adjustment to a new culture and country. A new congregation was born as the Santa Clara Ethnic Chinese Mennonite Church. This congregation meets each Sunday afternoon in the facilities of the El Camino Bible Church (Mennonite Brethren).

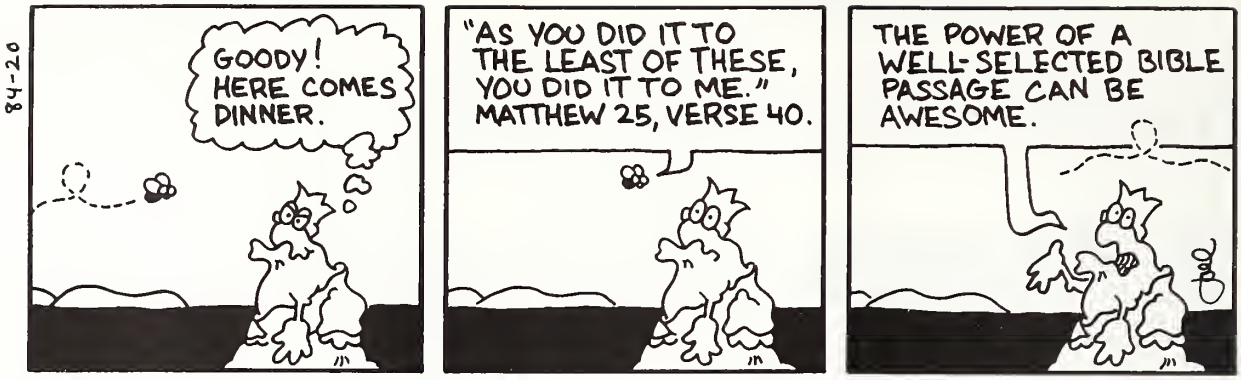
*Chinese Mennonite Church, Vancouver*

As I entered the auditorium on this Sunday afternoon, the congregation of about 130 people was waiting reverently for Mrs. Liu to lead the singing in a mixture of Mandarin, Cambodian and English.

Adam Liu spoke in Mandarin. One of the members translated this into Cambodian and Adam occasionally summarized in English for those who understood neither Mandarin nor Cambodian. I again became aware that just as the many people on the day of Pentecost heard the gospel in their own language, so today the gospel and ministry of the Holy Spirit knows no boundaries of language or culture.

*Donald E. Yoder, 1920 East Colgate Drive, Tempe, AZ 85283, serves both the General Conference and the Mennonite Church in church planting and evangelism.*

## Pontius' Puddle




# NEWS

# MWC to feature music, storytelling, discussion

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—Choirs from seven countries, panelists representing eight countries, stories, poems, and big discussion groups and small discussion groups are all among the elements of the program drawn up for the XI Mennonite World Conference Assembly here July 24-29.

The XI Assembly begins on Tuesday evening, July 24, and for the next four days consists of a pattern of 9 a.m. plenary sessions, 11 a.m. discussion groups, optional activities in the afternoon beginning at 2 p.m., and 8 p.m. evening sessions. For early risers there will be 8:15 prayers groups, and youth activities will be held from 10 p.m. to midnight.

The worship leader for the morning plenaries will be Anita Lichti of Schorndorf, West Germany. She is a member of the Stuttgart Mennonite Church and a coordinator for the Intermenno Trainee Program in Europe.

Lichti is also responsible for "Stories of Our Lives," a daily presentation for children and adults scheduled for the morning meetings.

Other contributors to the morning plenary sessions will be Kikweta Mawa Wabala of Zaire, who will have the meditation and prayer Wednesday morning; Lili Thiessen of West Germany, who will read poetry on Thursday morning; and June Yoder of the United States, who will tell the story "Welcoming the Enemy" on Saturday morning.

A team led by Stephen Shank of Belgium will be responsible for Scripture reading each morning.

Following each major speaker's address and a half-hour break, participants will be invited to join discussion groups led by volunteers from throughout the world. There will be one large group, meeting with the morning speaker, and approximately 60 small groups of under 60 people.

Evening sessions will feature reports from Asia, Africa and Central America. Timothy Liau of Taiwan, Takeji Nomura of Japan, Margaret Devadason of India and Paul Myers of the United States will form a panel to report on Asia on Wednesday evening. On Friday evening, Stephen Ndlovu, MWC vice president for Africa from Zimbabwe, will report on his continent.

Saturday evening's "Focus on Central America" will bring together Elier Rodriguez of Puerto Rico, Arnulfo Vado of Nicaragua, Cesar Del Aquila Canet of Guatemala, Erlinda de Rovelo of Honduras, Herman Bontrager of the United States and Elizia Murcia of Colombia.

Also on Saturday evening, Myron Augsburger and Charly Ummel will assist the congregation in preparing for communion the following morning. Augsburger is pastor of the Washington Community Fellowship, and Ummel is president of the Swiss Mennonite Conference and an elder in the Les Bulles congregation of Switzerland.

On Friday evening, European youth are in charge of part of the program under the direction of Ruth Raab of West Germany. Among other things they will perform several pantomimes and teach the congregation a new song.

The music planned for the assembly includes not only a diverse group of choirs but everything from congregational singing to a chamber orchestra and brass choir.

Two French choirs—one vocal and one brass—will perform at the Tuesday evening opening session under the direction of Georges Widmer and Willy Nussbaumer, respectively.

Another French-speaking choir will come from Zaire. This 10-member male group, under the direction of Mukanza Ilunga, will sing on several occasions.

Back for a second time to an MWC assembly will be a women's choir from Taiwan under the direction of Ruth Chen Lin (Wednesday evening).

Cornelius Epp and Gerhard Wedel of West Germany will direct contributions by the Bechterdissen and the Lage Mennonite Brethren church choirs, respectively, on Thursday. Both choirs are made up in part by recent immigrants from the Soviet Union (Umsiedler).

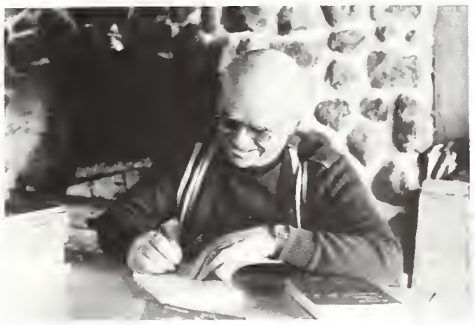
The Lage choir will be one of four choirs to participate in a specially-commissioned oratorio for MWC, "The Abiding Place," by Esther Wiebe and Barbara Smucker, which will be performed on Thursday evening. Other choirs participating in the oratorio will be the Zaire choir, the Winnipeg Oratorio Chorus from Manitoba, under the direction of George Wiebe, and the Mennonite Children's Choir of Winnipeg, Helen Litz, director.

Choirs from the United States, on the program for Friday, Saturday and Sunday mornings, are the Bluffton (Ohio) chancel choir under the direction of Earl Lehman, the Diamond Street Church choir of Philadelphia, under the direction of Tom Fitch, and the Goshen College chamber choir under the direction of Doyle Preheim.

Sherrie Strange of New York City will perform as soloist with the Diamond Street choir.

**The Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging** elected the following officers at its annual business meeting on March 23: Barbara Reber, chairperson for a two-year term; Bill Loewen, vice chairperson, and Carl Good, secretary-treasurer, for one-year terms. A new brochure on IMCA is available for wide distribution to increase visibility and awareness of its goals. A packet to stimulate congregational action with and among its aging population is also available from the IMCA office at Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, at a cost price of $2, including postage.

**"Where else could one interrupt** the main speaker of a convention so that the audience could look out the window at a beautiful pileated woodpecker?" asked Jess Kauffman at the biannual Mennonite Camping Association convention. Seventy-seven people representing 31 camps and retreat centers participated in the convention, held at Camp Arnes, Winnipeg, April 2-4. The theme was "Vision '84, Church Camping—Faithful to the Vision and Future." One highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the published history of Mennonite camping, *A Vision and a Legacy: The Story of Mennonite Camping 1920-1980*, by Jess Kauffman (right).



Finally, a Swiss choir will be used together with the communion preparation messages of Augsburger and Ummel on Saturday evening. Bernhard Scheidegger will conduct and Hanspeter Schneidegger will be soloist.

Members of many of these choirs will join to sing "Psalm 100" by Mendelssohn at the Sunday morning worship service under the direction of Margrit Ramseier of West Germany. Ramseier, Dora Geiser of West Germany and Frank Klassen of Canada serve as music coordinators for the XI Assembly.

Congregational singing is part of every mass session. The International Songbook used at the X Assembly in Wichita in 1978 will again be used. Song leaders for the conference will be Margrit Ramseier, Adolf Schnebele and Abram Enns of West Germany.

Accompanists will be Rachel Esso of France, Dick Klomp of the Netherlands, Inge Lichtenberger of West Germany and Theo Nussbaumer of France.

During the afternoons, four music performances are scheduled as part of an array of optional activities. On Tuesday a choir from Alberta under the direction of Ronald Dyck will perform the cantata "Every Deliverance" written By Carol Dyck and commemorating the flight of Russian Mennonites over the Amur River into China in 1930.

The musical "Ruth" will be performed twice (Thursday and Friday) by a choir from Amsterdam under the direction of Dick Klomp. Klomp is the composer of "Ruth" and also was composer and director of a musical performed in Wichita in 1978.

An octet from Canada representing Mennonite Brethren Communications will perform on Thursday afternoon. George Baier directs this group, which sings in *Plattdeutsch* and Russian.

On Friday afternoon, the West German group Challenge will perform under the direction of Henrich Gingerich of West Germany.

An orchestra of people from Southwest Germany under the direction of Berthold Kliewer will perform a concert Saturday afternoon. William Reimer and Edith Wiens-Moser, Canadians living in West Germany, will be soloists.

Finally, those who will be able to remain after the final Sunday morning mass session may attend a Sunday afternoon choir festival featuring the Goshen College, Taiwan and Diamond Street choirs and a group called Convergence directed by Victor Hugo dos Santos of France.

Besides the optional music programs and performances, other optional afternoon activities will include "sectional meetings," showings of the film "Strasbourg: City of Hope," working groups and interest groups.

Sectional meetings, a kind of mass interest group, will be held Wednesday through Saturday.

Working groups for people with certain assignments, occupations or church roles will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Interest groups follow at 4:15 p.m.

## 'Dialogue on Faith' to be held at Wisconsin camp

Newton, Kan.—"Dialogue on Faith," a three-day consultation to promote mutual listening and understanding across the theological spectrum of the General Conference, will be held Oct. 26-28 at Camp Wonderland near Camp Lake, Wis.

Discussions there will revolve around three main themes: biblical interpretation, authority issues and Anabaptism for today.

At a meeting in Chicago on April 25, planners of the confab identified its overarching goal as being "to allow the unity of the Spirit to hold us together while we open dialogue on diverse interpretations in discerning biblical truth and practice."

To achieve that objective, planners agreed that Dialogue on Faith would be designed "(1) to actively hear and understand each other without the need to resolve all potentially divisive issues at this time, (2) to clarify the meaning of being Anabaptist within our complex society and (3) to use dialogue, prayer, worship, learning and fellowship as a means of hearing what the Spirit and the Word have to say to us today."

Consultation participants will also hear presentations on each of the three themes, take part in plenary and small group discussions and "share faith stories" as part of the weekend.

Conceived by the conference's General Board at its sessions last March, Dialogue on Faith was originally seen as attracting about 150 people from various theological groups within the church. Wide interest in the event since then, however, prompted the planning committee to search for a site with a greater capacity. Camp Wonderland can accommodate 450 people.

Further details about the consultation's schedule, registration and costs will be distributed to General Conference pastors through *Leadership*, a monthly newsletter, although lay people are also invited to attend. The conference's General Board will hold its fall meetings just prior to Dialogue on Faith.

The Dialogue on Faith planning committee consists of Richard Early, Souderton, Pa., Bertha Harder, North Newton, Kan., Dotty Janzen, Hillsboro, Kan., Henry Neufeld, Portage la Prairie, Man., Jake Tilitzky, Abbotsford, B.C., Ted VanderEnde, Pandora, Ohio, and Erland Waltner, Elkhart, Ind.

Camp Wonderland, a Salvation Army facility, is located 60 miles northwest of Chicago.

**Canada is fourth** of 110 countries in cigarette consumption, with a daily average of per-capita use of 7.7 cigarettes. Nations which use more cigarettes per capita than Canada are Cyprus, Greece and Cuba. The United States is fifth with a 7.3 per-capita use.

**After five years of drought,** farming families in Boa Viagem, northern Brazil, have eaten their chickens, goats and pigs. They have even resorted to eating their seed grain to keep hunger at bay. In late January the mayor of Boa Viagem invited Mennonite Central Committee to help with a seed distribution project and to set up a seed bank for farmers in the area. MCC workers Dave and Margaret Brubaker and Byron Good traveled 15 hours from Recife by pickup truck to help. They distributed 6½ pounds of bean and 15 pounds of corn seed to each of 1,217 families living there.

**The Bethel College** Board of Directors met March 8-10 in North Newton, Kan., and gave final approval to a proposed package of projects to be funded through the college's "Building for a Second Century" Centennial Fund Drive. The campaign will be conducted for five years. The visual centerpiece of the centennial will be a new library and media center. The 25,000-square-foot addition will be built immediately west of the current library and will connect with it for efficiency in staffing and in joint technical services. The site, conceptual design and building costs of $1.94 million were approved by the board.

# Administrators, educators consult on theology of service

Chicago (Meetinghouse)—Some 40 service administrators and church educators from the Anabaptist tradition met in Chicago, April 5-8, to sing and pray together and to consider the state of their church's programs of service to the deprived in our society. Labeled a "Consultation on theology and service," the meeting was a follow-up to a similar one two years earlier, although only three or four of the 40 had attended the former meeting.

Participants in the earlier meeting had seen a need for service workers to get more serious about the "issues of justice in structural evil." They concluded that "the church needs to be working at both the binding of wounds of victims as well as speaking to the structures which cause those victims." And they asked themselves whether the average voluntary service worker has adequate training to confront "the structural evil." So they decided to give special attention in this consultation to "Preparation for Christian justice ministries: integrating action and reflection."

Besides song and prayer, the elements in the program were mainly three: (1) case studies of voluntary service experiences, emphasizing educational preparations for service ministry; (2) field trips in the Chicago area to visit local service ministries; (3) Bible studies on the theme. And, of course, discussion in formal and informal settings.

The consultation provided its own prophet in the person of Bible teacher Perry Yoder from Bethel College who alternately threatened and cajoled the group with his emphases on God's concern for justice and the call to do yeoman service on behalf of the downtrodden. Two expressions of his which became common currency in the consultation were "redemptive justice" as the definition of justice assumed in the Bible, and "servanthood service" as the appropriated lifestyle for Christians.

Both expressions are better understood in contrast to the alternatives which they are expected to replace: retributive and distributive justice (people ought to get what they deserve in punishment and in merit) and service from the top down done by experts and agencies for clients using special techniques to solve the problems of the people.

"Servanthood service," said Yoder, "is enabling those in need by sharing resources, especially power and control. . . . Jesus was able to put himself at the mercy of historical vicissitudes. Can we do any less, or will we continue to fortify ourselves?" He raised two pointed questions, one for schools and one for service agencies: (1) "How do we educate for servanthood service rather than for elite service? (2) Can church agencies develop structures that will allow people to be servanthood servants and work at redemptive justice?"

These presentations brought out considerable discussion and self-analysis. Some confessed that the bent of our educational system is toward the training of experts and they wondered whether our schools can teach servanthood service since they don't really practice it. Tom Neufeld of Conrad Grebel College asserted the Mennonite educational systems are "elitist." "The problem is how to train people for justice in institutions which are not that way. But thanks be to God the Spirit works in spite of ourselves."

Hubert Schwartzentruber, mission consultant for the Mennonite conference of Ontario and Quebec said, "Sometimes in my worst moments I would wish we would run out of money so God could fill us again and move us in his direction."

But David Dyck of MCC Canada warned of the danger in extreme positions: "The only alternative to the status quo seems to be to give all our money away. Since we aren't going to do that we keep on doing what we're doing. I think we can move in the right direction without trying to jump the whole way at once."

The case studies and field trips illustrated a wider variety of experiences than the consultation could analyze, but the message that came through was that more than "Band-Aids" are needed for the ills of society. The first case told of Lisa Swartz, a Church of the Brethren volunteer who served as "night resident" in a center for abused women. The second case described the problem of

*(Continued on p. 253)*

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**Thirty-two pastors** and lay leaders participated in the first Bible lands study/travel tour organized by the General Conference's Ministerial Leadership Services office. The group, under the leadership of MLS director Jacob T. Friesen, left from Chicago on Feb. 15. The nine-day tour included lectures and sightseeing at dozens of points in Israel. Nineteen members of the group added a six-day tour extension to Egypt. Participants came from four Canadian provinces and seven U.S. states. Invitations had been extended to all General Conference pastors and lay leaders in the two countries.

**Faculty, students, family and friends** gathered in the Conrad Grebel College chapel in Waterloo, Ont., on April 8 for the fourth annual baccalaureate service to recognize the 42 graduating students affiliated with the college. Nancy Dykstra, a graduating student in environmental studies, gave the student address on the topic "Wisdom and Intellectualism." Rod Sawatsky, academic dean, challenged the graduates with an address highlighting what the college seeks as its goal. Ralph Lebold, president, presented each graduate with a one-year subscription to *The Conrad Grebel Review*.

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young minority people in the United States who are pressured to accept military service and are sorely tempted to do so because they lack other opportunities.

A third case was represented by the volunteer herself. Emily North is enrolled in the Washington Study Service Year (WSSY) from Eastern Mennonite College. She described her service and the dilemma of people caught in the unwed mother systems: "I feel that I am only a bandage and have no long-term affect," said Emily, "but WSSY has solidified my interest in social work."

The consultation concluded with 14 specific recommendations, including the following:

- That our churches and church-related organizations be challenged to call people to join the work of the church in Christian justice vocations.
- That educational centers participate in interdisciplinary discussions regarding the problems of doing Christian justice ministries.
- That local congregations be a focal point of Christian justice ministries in their communities, and that our agencies operate within this framework.
- That a team of five people representing the denominations concerned be appointed to give direction to implementing these specific actions and to convene the next consultation.

Repeated frustration was expressed by members of the consultation because no president or dean of any of our educational institutions had accepted the invitation to attend. Hence, the desire to talk seriously at the highest administrative level about the adequacy of training in our schools for a ministry of justice was thwarted.

Participants in the consultation included members of the Church of the Brethren, Brethren in Christ, General Conference Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Mennonite Church.
*Daniel Hertzler*


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Robert Coote, OMSC staff.

**October 16-19**
**Crucial Issues in Mission Today.**
Dr. Gerald Anderson, OMSC director.

**October 22-26**
**The Future of World Evangelization: Scenarios, Strategies, Resources.***
Dr. David Barrett, editor, *World Christian Encyclopedia.*

**October 30-November 2**
**History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission.**
Dr. Samuel Moffett, Princeton Seminary. Cosponsored by Princeton Seminary Center for Continuing Education.

**November 5-9**
**When Faith Meets Faiths: Christian Witness in Today's Pluralistic Societies.***
Rev. Patrick Sookhdeo, London; member of Lausanne Study Group on Witness to Muslims.

**November 13-16**
**Evangelicals and Roman Catholics in Mission: Convergences and Divergences.**
Rev. Thomas Stransky, The Paulists.

**November 26-30**
**The Advance of the Gospel Among Primal Peoples: Lessons for Wider Witness.***
Dr. Andrew Walls, University of Aberdeen.

**December 3-7**
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Dr. John Powell, Michigan State University.

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**The Midwest Student and Young Adult Workers** Conference will be held June 9 at First Mennonite of Champaign-Urbana Church in Urbana, Ill. It is "an opportunity for young adult contact persons and church workers to resource each other." For information write James L. Dunn, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

**Warm, cloudless skies** greeted the largest crowd ever at the 17th annual West Coast Mennonite Relief Sale, held at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific College April 6-7. The weekend activities netted $154,800 for relief work. On April 13-14 the Mid-Kansas MCC Relief Sale in Hutchinson, Kan., had a record crowd of over 40,000. The weekend's total income there was $325,000. The Kansas sale became the first Mennonite relief sale to hold a beef cattle auction. It brought in $13,000.

*Scene from the West Coast Mennonite Relief Sale*

# TV ministries not to blame for declining church attendance

Philadelphia(UP)—The television ministries that attract millions of viewers and contributors are influential with their audiences, but watching religious programs doesn't keep people from going to church.

Those who support evangelical broadcasters also attend and contribute to local churches, according to a two-year study of religion and television released April 16 by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

The Gallup Organization of Princeton, N.J., also participated in the study, which was commissioned by a group of more than 30 religious organizations, including the General Conference Mennonite Church's media division.

The idea that the "electronic church" is responsible for declining participation in local churches was contradicted by the research findings. But also disproved was the belief that charismatic television personalities have created a new and expanding audience of religious converts. Rather, the researchers found that this stable and loyal television audience displayed a longstanding allegiance to organized religion.

"Television ministries have been suspected of causing or at least contributing to the erosion of mainline church membership, financial contributions and general participation," said George Gerbner, dean of the Annenberg School of Communications and a member of the research team. "Our study found no support for that charge.

"There must be other explanations if church attendance has declined and there is a lack of financial support," he said. Gerbner added that research over the years has shown that, in many respects, prime-time television drama—with its much larger audience—is "the new religion," not the programs that are religious in content.

"Watching television has become a ritual that meets certain needs that used to be satisfied by religion," Gerbner said.

According to surveys conducted for this report, there are about 13.3 million regular viewers in the United States of religious programs covering all denominations. This is about 6.2 percent of the estimated number of people in households with televisions.

"We found that the audience for religious television is smaller than has been claimed, though this group is consistent in its viewing habits," said the researchers. "The programs appeal to an older, traditional audience, and watching these programs appears to be a confirmation of their religious beliefs, not a substitute for them. Their interest in the electronic church is complementary to other forms of religious practice, like church worship."

Members of this audience, drawn by television content not found on other television shows, are older, have less education and income, are more conservative politically and are more "fundamentalist" in their religious beliefs.

Other characteristics comparing viewers to non-viewers:

- Half of the viewers say they are dissatisfied with the "prevailing moral climate," compared to only one-third of non-viewers,
- Half of the viewers consider evangelicalism and missionary work to be the main goal of the church; only one-third of the non-viewers felt this way,
- Conversely, only one-fifth of the viewers said the church should be "working for social justice," but one-third of the non-viewers consider this a priority of the church,
- Heavy viewers of religious programs express greater confidence in local church leaders than both light viewers and non-viewers, and
- Heavy viewers of general television are less likely than light viewers to read the Bible.

In addition to the evangelical broadcasters, television programs are also produced by local church organizations. According to an analysis of their content, the essential features of both types of programs are similar. Discussions of political issues occur in about half of both types of programs.

There is frequent condemnation of abortion, homosexuality and other behavior described as deviant. "Sinful sexual behavior," for example, was addressed in one out of four religious programs.

Regarding the relationship between the television ministries and local congregations, the study revealed that local churches are mentioned in one of every four of these religious programs. Viewers were urged to attend church in one out of 10 programs.

On the evangelical programs, the most often mentioned personal problems were family tensions, financial and health problems, unemployment and physical handicaps. In one of every four programs a solution suggested for these difficulties was a financial contribution to the ministry.

In fact, a key distinction between the two types of programs is the solicitation of funds. The television evangelists are more likely to ask for money, to make more numerous requests and ask for greater amounts.

Who are the participants in religious television programs? According to the researchers, these individuals are predominantly white and male. Distinctions between the sexes are portrayed in traditional ways. "People who inhabit religious television are similar to the characters who populate the fictional world of prime-time drama," they said.

**A suburban church seminar** sponsored by the Inter-Mennonite Home Ministries Council in cooperation with the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec will be held June 4-6 at the Hagerman Mennonite Church, Milliken, Ont. The seminar is both a forum for Mennonite church leaders to discuss concerns in building churches in suburban communities for middle and upper-income people and a meeting to challenge local churches to develop enthusiasm and skills in church development in a growing, suburban community. For more information write Suburban Church Seminar, Mennonite Board of Missions, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515.

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## Children's programs succeed

Newton, Kan.—Weekday children's programs are conducted in both the Trenton (Ohio) Church and First Mennonite Church, Nappanee, Ind. A large percentage of children participating in these programs are unchurched—75 percent in Trenton and 40 percent in Nappanee. Each program has around 25 children enrolled.

The two programs have a similar format, which includes singing, a story, a craft and a light refreshment. Teachers use films, puppets and object lessons in their instruction.

Some crafts at the Nappanee church recently included mobiles, wooden plaques and murals. In an extra activity, children made a friendship board with photos. They memorized during a six-week period, relating Scripture to the stories and crafts. They also took field trips to an Amish farm, a community health program that provides food and clothing to the needy, and the Open Door, where they contributed colorful boxes filled with food. Classes are held from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Trenton's program runs from 3 p.m. until 4:15 p.m., so that local elementary school children can come after their classes dismiss. For grades one to six the program operates for seven months of the year.

"We've caught a little more vision for outreach," said First Mennonite's pastor, Robin LaRue. "Because of the program some parents of participating children have begun attending our church service. The program went beyond our expectations."

The Trenton Mennonite "After School Club" celebrated its 10th anniversary at its club meeting on April 25. The theme for the occasion was "God Loves Me," using the song "God is So Good." The children received gifts and had a Bible quiz, reviewing favorite Bible stories. *Marion Keeney Preheim*

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Children's Foundation Series Revised

The new revised Foundation Series for Children is available for inspection. It will be used in the churches in September 1984. While the goals and basic plan of the Series remain the same, changes have been made in design and methodology. More advance organizers will help the inexperienced teacher. Story focus and faith meaning statements to summarize the lesson and identify goals have been added for each session.

Numbered step-by-step progression through the lesson will be helpful for teachers who have a minimum of preparation time. Teaching methods have also been more adequately spelled out. Other improvements will become evident when the material is used in the classroom.

## Meet Dietrich Rempel,

Manager of Faith and Life Press. As manager Dietrich is responsible for the production of all Faith and Life Press materials, whether it is a trade book or curriculum. In addition to books and curriculum Faith and Life Press does all the printing and mailing of informational materials produced by the various departments of the General Conference. Dietrich, an avid biker, has worked for the General Conference since 1963.

"For no other Foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Cor. 3:11 (NKJV)

## Faith and Life Press

Faith and Life Press is the publishing arm for the General Conference. The operation is under the supervision of the Publishing Division of the Commission on Education. The major effort in publishing is the production of The Foundation Series and other educational literature for the church. Faith and Life Press is also the trade name through which books are marketed to local bookstores. Its purpose is to assist the church (General Conference Mennonite Church in particular and the Christian church in general) in making available (printing, promoting, selling) printed and other material which furthers the Christian faith. A special emphasis is placed on those materials which are not otherwise readily available but are specifically related to the teachings of Jesus made relevant for our day even as the Anabaptists made them relevant for their day.

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

**A General Conference congregation** in North Dakota has closed its doors, according to *The Northern Light*. The March issue of the Northern District Conference's periodical reports that the 24-member Zion Mennonite Church of rural Arena, N.D., disbanded on Feb. 29, choosing not to continue meeting. Bill Biby, the church's former pastor, and his wife have since taken positions with Child Evangelism in Bismark, N.D., says the *Light*.

**More than 200 people,** over half of them foreigners, gathered in Volturara, Italy, on March 25 to dedicate a new community center. European Mennonites and Mennonite Central Committee worked together with the Free Mission Conference of Switzerland on the task of rebuilding the town following the December 1980 earthquake, which destroyed over half the buildings in the small mountain village. According to Walter Sawatsky, MCC Europe director, one of the highlights of the Volturara project was that it was the first time that three Mennonite relief agencies in Europe worked together on a project with MCC.

**Many youth** (ages 16-19) and youth leaders are preparing for Great Trek 2, a Canadian Mennonite Youth Assembly to be held at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ont., Aug. 22-25. Planners are expecting 530 participants. The theme, "Running the Race: Looking to Jesus," will be expanded upon in the four main sessions by Mary Mae Swartzentruber, pastor at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., and Peter Dyck, longtime MCC worker. For information write Great Trek 2, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

# MCC delegation recommends food production aid to Vietnam

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Following a two-week visit to Vietnam March 16-30, a three-person Mennonite Central Committee delegation has recommended that MCC aid to that country focus on food production, particularly irrigation and water control projects, during the next two years.

The group traveled the length of Vietnam, visiting Hanoi and Vinh Phu province in the north, Hue and Binh Tri Thien province in central Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Can Tho and Minh Hai province in the far south.

The delegation included Herb Wiebe of La Riviere, Man., a civil engineer who formerly worked with MCC in Bangladesh; Louise Buhler, MCC representative for Vietnam who lives in Bangkok, Thailand; and Murray Hiebert, who worked with MCC in Vietnam in the mid-1970s and is currently co-director of the Indochina Project in Washington.

The delegation recommended that MCC help construct a pumping station this year in Vinh Phu province, about 60 kilometers northeast of Hanoi in the densely populated Red River delta. The province does not now grow enough rice to feed its population, according to provincial officials.

The MCC visitors saw more malnourished children in Vinh Phu province than in other regions of Vietnam they visited. A doctor in the provincial hospital estimated that 70 percent of Vietnam's children suffer from malnutrition.

The purpose of the proposed pumping station is to drain water from 1,150 hectares of low-lying land during the rainy season. At present, farmers cannot plant a summer rice crop here because of flooding during the monsoon rains. After the pumping station is completed, provincial officials estimate that rice production in the area will increase from two tons per hectare to five tons.

Farmers in the area had already begun work on the project, using shovels, baskets and their bare hands to remove dirt. MCC has been asked to provide water pumps, transformers, electrical wire and cement.

Herb Wiebe, who works as a consultant to the Canadian International Development Agency on a large irrigation project in Bangladesh, was favorably impressed both with the effectiveness of the completed water control projects he visited in Vietnam and with the thoroughness with which Vietnamese technicians had planned for the projects presented to MCC for possible funding.

Food production in Vietnam has increased rapidly in recent years, thanks to the wide-ranging economic reforms introduced three years ago which give more material incentives to farmers in cooperatives. But most Vietnamese agronomists doubt that production can be increased much more in the coming years without large foreign inputs for fertilizer and water control projects.

The delegation will also recommend that MCC plan to assist an irrigation project in Binh Tri Thien province in central Vietnam in 1985. Many legacies of the war are still obvious in this province that straddles the 17th parallel that formerly divided Vietnam. Nearly half of the province's forests were defoliated. Tanks and other war scrap still lie rusting along the major roads. People are still sometimes injured by unexploded ordnance while working in their fields.

Food production in Binh Tri Thien is further hampered by frequent natural calamities. Last year the province was ravaged by a series of typhoons. Province officials are convinced that by constructing water reservoirs farmers will be better able to protect their rice crop against recurring floods and droughts.

The delegation is recommending that MCC help rebuild a water reservoir destroyed by a typhoon last year. The reservoir is located about 12 kilometers southwest of the old capital of Hue.

Reconstruction of the reservoir, which will provide water for double-cropping on about 300 hectares of rice fields, is already under way. *Murray Hiebert*

*Herb Wiebe and Vietnamese engineers discuss Tan Xuoi pumping station.*

**Inside Neak Luong Hospital's** new compound wall, flowers have replaced the waist-high weeds of last year. The buildings that were bombed by the United States in 1972, a navigator's mistake, are again open to serve some 350,000 people. The reconstruction of Neak Luong Hospital in Kampuchea's Prey Veng province, was a joint venture of the province, Mennonite Central Committee and the Phnom Penh Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs. MCC has reached an agreement with the Ministry of Health for MCC to provide medicines and a medical team from the Mennonite Church in India to help establish medical services at there.

**Robert Shaw,** conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and world renowned choral expert, will be the guest conductor for the Church Music Seminar VI, to be held Jan. 21-25, 1985, in Winnipeg. Shaw will rehearse and perform two choral/orchestral works: the Bach Cantata #4 (*Christ lag in Todesbanden*) and Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Seminar VI Festival Chorus. The Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra will accompany these two works in a public concert on Jan. 25, 1985. Anyone interested in participating should write to Church Music Seminar VI, c/o CMBC, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

**The Milwaukee Mennonite Fellowship** recently purchased a building for use as a parsonage and meetinghouse. Co-pastors Clarice and Lawrence Kratz occupy an upstairs apartment in the structure, which formerly belonged to the Waukesha Women's Club. The downstairs area seats 100 and has a kitchen, dining room and offices. Financing for the $65,000 facility included $10,000 from the Central District Conference and $50,000 from the General Conference's Church Extension Services, Inc.

# RECORd

## MINISTERS

*Ryan Ahlgrim* has become pastor of the newly formed North-Peoria Fellowship, Peoria, Ill. He graduated from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., in May 1983.

*Menno* and *Margaretha Ediger*, co-pastors of Community Church, Markham, Ill., since November 1978, have resigned their pastorate there effective in November.

*Marilyn Miller*, co-pastor of Arvada (Colo.) Church for the past eight years, will move to Boulder, Colo., by Sept. 1 to help begin a new congregation.

*James Mohr* will become pastor of First Church, Wadsworth, Ohio, June 15. He has served as campus pastor and director of church relations at Bluffton (Ohio) College since 1975. He earlier served as pastor of Hereford Church, Bally, Pa., for 10 years.

## WORKERS

*Frank Born*, overseas mission volunteer with the Commission on Overseas Mission, returned to Abbotsford, B.C., from Taiwan on April 1.

*Edward* and *Ramoth (Lowe) Burkhalter*, First Church, Berne, Ind., will be on North America Assignment under COM from July 15 to Oct. 10. They are involved in evangelism and church work assignments in India through Theological Education by Extension, counseling and women's development.

*Jim* and *Cheryl Campbell*, missionaries to Zaire under COM and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, returned to Walnut Creek, Calif., from Nyanga, Zaire, on March 30. They have terminated their service with COM/AIMM early because of the serious illness of Jim's mother. The Campbells were both involved in agricultural and development projects in Zaire.

*Miller*

*Mohr*

*Unrau*

*Watkins*

*Virginia Claassen*, Emmaus Church, Whitewater, Kan., will be on NAA for six months in late summer and fall. She works with the Sadowara church in Japan.

*Helen Ens*, Blumenorter Church, Rosetown, Man., will be on NAA from August to mid-October. Her assignment in Mexico consists of adult education, bookstore coordination and part-time teaching at the high school level.

*Harry* and *Mary Ann (Penner) Froese*, North Star Church, Drake, Sask., return to Saskatchewan in June after a two-year term of COM service in Taiwan. Both were involved in Hwalien Christian School for children of expatriates, mostly missionaries.

*Virgil* and *Mary Kay (Ramseyer) Gerig*, Hively Avenue Church, Elkhart, Ind., will terminate a two-year term of COM/AIMM service in Lesotho. Virgil has been pastoring the Maseru United Church along with some AIMM administrative duties. Mary Kay has been serving as hostess for missionaries and many visitors.

*Oswald H. Goering* has been named director of the Bethel College Peace Lecture Series, replacing Robert Kreider.

*Gloria Hegge* completed her overseas mission volunteer assignment under COM in Kobe, Japan, on April 7. She has returned to the United States, where she plans to continue her studies for future service with COM.

*Lorene Lehman*, Oak Grove Church, Smithville, Ohio, has begun a three-year MCC assignment in Minuf, Egypt, as a teacher of nursing. She has a bachelor's degree in nursing from Goshen (Ind.) College. She is the daughter of Lawrence Lehman of Smithville and the late Joan Steiner Lehman.

*Ken Steider*, Hesston (Kan.) Church, will leave his responsibilities as administrative assistant at Mennonite Christian Hospital, Hwalien, Taiwan, for a six-week NAA under COM this summer.

*Helen Unrau*, Douglas Church, Winnipeg, began a two-year MVS term Aug. 19, 1983, as a teacher at Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz. A 1969 graduate of the University of Manitoba, her parents are the late John and Helena Unrau.

*Bonnie Watkins*, Little Log Church, Palmer Lake, Colo., began a two-year MVS term Feb. 4 as a child-care worker at Markham, Ill. Her parents are Virgil and JoAnn Watkins of Palmer Lake.

**Evangelicals and the Bishops' Pastoral Letter**, edited by Dean C. Curry (Eerdmans, 1984), is a collection of essays organized around the major themes of the U.S. Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter approved on May 3, 1983. The authors represent a variety of perspectives among Evangelicals.

Jan Gleysteen's **Mennonite Tourguide to Western Europe** (Herald Press, 1984) contains a general introduction to Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Italy, with information of general geographical, historical, religious, sociological and cultural interest, as well as practical information. The 340-page quality paperback with rounded corners (with 115 photos, 18 charts and sketches, 16 maps and two-color printing throughout) is available for $12.95 ($15.55 in Canada).

"We are living at a time of radical reassessment of the meaning of sexuality, and we have the opportunity of a better understanding than ever before of the unity between love and sex," writes Jack Dominian in **The Growth of Love and Sex** (Eerdmans, 1984), available for $4.95.

**Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World** by David E. Aune (Eerdmans, 1983) offers the first comprehensive treatment in English of the place of prophecy in the New Testament period. It is available in hardcover for $29.95.

Mennonite Central Committee has released "**A Time to Heal and to Help**," a new study packet about Southeast Asia. It is available from MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, or MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8.

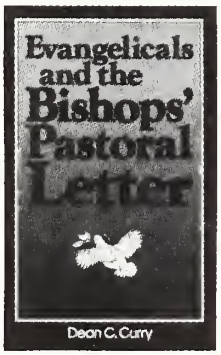
Melodie M. Davis writes about her experience as a voluntary service worker in Kentucky in **On Troublesome Creek** (Herald Press, 1983). It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.15 in Canada).

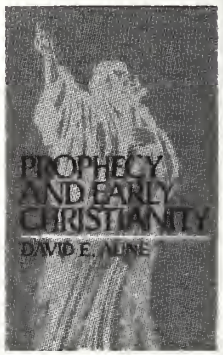
**Strangers Become Friends** is a new slide set produced by Mennonite Central Committee. It shows how lives are changed through the friendships of MCC workers and the people they meet. The 16-minute slide set is available from all MCC offices in the United States and Canada.

Radio personality Art McPhee's latest book, **Have a Great Day Every Day!** (Herald Press, 1984), offers biblical reflections on nine principles for spiritual growth, a meditation each day for eight weeks. The 160-page quality paperback is available for $6.50 ($7.80 in Canada).

**Eve and After** by John Carlisle (Eerdmans, 1984) is a collection of poems about women in the Old Testament. It is annotated with references to the pertinent biblical passages and includes a study guide. Cost is $6.95.

"**The Progressions of Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section**" is a 23-page topical history written in outline form by Frank H. Epp and Marlene G. Epp. Copies have been placed in most Mennonite libraries and archives and




may be purchased from MCC Peace Section, Akron, PA 17501.

The American Friends Service Committee has released a revised edition of **What's Wrong in Central America . . . and What to Do About It** by Phillip Berryman. It is available for $3.00 (plus 50¢ postage) from Peace Education, AFSC, 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Three new children's novels have been published by Herald Press: **Crisis at Pemberton Dike** by Rachel Sherwood Roberts ($6.50), **Remember the Eagle Day** by Guenn Martin ($5.95) and **And I'm Stuck with Joseph** by Susan Sommer ($3.50).

**Crown of Thorns**, a Holy Week liturgy suitable for use in Good Friday services, has been prepared by American Christians for the Abolition of Torture. It is available for $1 from ACAT, 300 W. Apsley St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.

Paul Yonggi Cho, pastor of Central Gospel Church in Seoul, Korea, the world's largest church, has written **More Than Numbers** (Word Books, 1984), and he insists that his method will work anywhere in the world. Cost is $8.95.

**Big Questions** by Richard A. Kauffman (Herald Press, 1984) discusses six questions: How can I cope with failure? Does belief in God make sense? Why do some people suffer? Why am I tempted? Does God have a plan for my life? And do miracles really happen? The 72-page paperback is available for $2.50 ($3 in Canada).

A new Central America study packet is available from MCC. It includes country-by-country sketches, an update on the refugee situation and a report on


***FOCUS:***
***Churches united in sharing***

FOCUS (Funding Opportunities for Congregations United in Sharing) adds to the resources congregations can gather to help members with special needs. Needs that result from accident . . . disability . . . disaster. Needs that aren't medically related.

Using matching FOCUS grants, ***church groups double the mileage per dollar they use to help members in need.*** Resources from the local congregations . . . and the larger Mennonite family . . . flow together to help sharing happen.

For a complete description of FOCUS, call toll-free 800-348-7468; or (219) 533-9511, collect within Indiana.

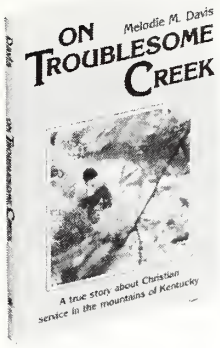
Mennonite Mutual Aid

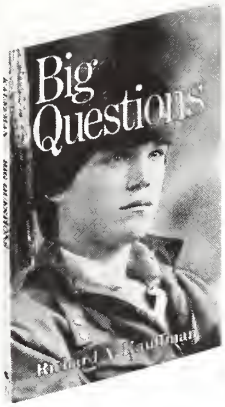
# RESOURCES

MCC work in the region. A new MCC slide set titled **"Hear Us: Voices from Central America"** is also available. Write MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, or MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8.

**The Furies and the Flame** by Ingrid Rimland (Arena Press, 1984) is the true story of the author's struggle to raise her brain-damaged son. It is available in hardcover for $15.

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization and the World Evangelical Fellowship have published **Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment**. It is available for $2 from: LCWA, Box 1100, Wheaton, IL 60187.




**Luther: A Reformer for the Churches** (Paulist Press, 1984) is an ecumenical study guide by Mark Edwards, a Lutheran, and George H. Tavard, a Catholic. It is available for $4.95.

Dreams are unconscious invitations that offer proof of God's living Spirit, according to Clyde H. Reid in **Dreams: Discovering Your Inner Teacher** (Winston Press, 1983). It is available for $7.95.

# LETTERS

## Thanks for the gift

Thanks for whoever is responsible for forwarding *The Mennonite* to me. Although it's slow in arriving, I read it from cover to cover.

I am in my second term with MCC in Egypt. My home is in Swift Current, Sask., and I am a graduate of Swift Current Bible Institute and the University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon) with my bachelor's degree in nursing. I passed through Akron, Pa., last June on a private orientation. I often see familiar faces in the pages about volunteers being sent out from Canada through MCC. No blurb ever mentioned my assignment. Perhaps that's why not as many people are writing. Who is responsible for passing on such information to our church papers? I always thought MCC did this.

Although I work in a part of the world where birth control and overpopulation are vital issues, I battle with saving lives one by one. My area of work is maternity. Here I come in contact with many mothers who have given birth half a dozen times or more and have no living children.

Somehow the world statistics become meaningless when confronted by a mother and an infant weighing less than two pounds and when all her hopes are placed in our care to help this wee one survive.

Thanks again for *The Mennonite*, whoever is paying for it. *Helena Peters, American Mission Hospital, Box 65, Tanta, Egypt*

March 23

**Editor's note:** Helena is one of about 100 foreign readers who receive *The Mennonite* either as a private gift or as a gift through our office. These subscriptions are again coming due.

Would you like to support such gifts? Please mail donations to *The Mennonite, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*, or to *600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.* Gifts are tax deductible.

## Note of appreciation

Just a quick note to let you know how much I have been enjoying *The Mennonite* in recent months. I like your use of color, your articles and your willingness to try new ideas. I was challenged by the idea of including a phonograph record in your March 27 issue, as well as the "Window to Mission" insert. These are ideas we should be considering as well at the *Friends Journal*.

I was extremely moved by your editorial "Death Exploded My Hopes," which I just saw in the *Evangelical Visitor*. Your personal sharing has been a comfort to me as I am sure it has been to many. *Vinton Deming, Editor-Manager,* Friends Journal, *1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102*

April 16

## Shaky experience

You ought to know that those two articles by Cal Redekop (March 27 and April 10 issues) were pretty powerful. I was preaching on Easter Sunday evening at the Mellinger Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa. When I came to share with them the gist of Cal's concern about a wholistic stewardship instead of tithing, at the appropriate moment a loud roar like a passenger train moving fast past a depot was heard and the platform under me vibrated. I stopped to ask the congregation what that was. They were frightened, some were white as sheets, some ready to crawl under the benches. "That was an earthquake!"

I paused to help the congregation become relaxed and asked if they have earthquakes around Lancaster, and their answer was "no!" Then I asked if they were OK, and the over 400 people claimed it was OK to continue the service. I tried, but I found myself so disoriented that I didn't really know where I was in my message. Someone called out, "You just started telling us about Cal Redekop." So I made my point, found my train of thought, and the service had great attention.

The Lancaster paper recorded on Easter Monday that at least 4.1 was measured on the Richter Scale. It was enough to shake the ground, rattle nerves, send chandeliers swinging and some Mennonites trying to get under church benches.

I will think twice before I quote Cal again in Lancaster County.

Thanks for the articles, like the rest of *The Mennonite*, good stuff. *Peter B. Wiebe, 7843 Smucker Road, Smithville, OH 44677*

April 24

# What does church membership mean?

*Cornelius Driedger*

The New Testament church was born on Pentecost. Upon the Holy Spirit's coming, Peter obediently challenged his listeners to repent and be baptized. "So those who received his word were baptized . . . they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayers . . . the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:41, 42, 47).

Probably nobody worried about church membership in that first church. It happened spontaneously. Sometimes we dream about that and wonder why we make it so demanding and complicated.

But the church is in a state of becoming. What worked well 2,000 years ago, or even 100 or 25 years ago, may not be appropriate today. Yet our calling is to be ". . . a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds . . ." (1 Peter 2:9).

God is a God of order (1 Corinthians 14:40), so the church must be a people of order. Floyd Bartel, former secretary of church growth for the General Conference Commission on Home Ministries and now pastor of First Church, Newton, Kan., writes in *Making Membership Meaningful* (an unpublished manuscript): "The Bible uses the word covenant to speak of the special relationship we now have with Jesus and with fellow believers. Becoming members of a congregation is accepting in a visible way the relationship we are experiencing with fellow believers. . . .

"A membership covenant means committing ourselves to a trusting, loving and serving relationship. All the details of the relationship are seldom spelled out. A covenant is different from a contract. A contract spells out specific dos and don'ts. A covenant is a commitment to a relationship. The dos and don'ts are determined by that basic commitment. The relationship is never reduced to mere contractual terms. . . .

"Thus a member is . . . committed to . . . Jesus Christ, . . . to a congregation, to participate, to give and receive counsel, to serve as part of a local congregation and to grow in these committed relationships. . ." (page 2).

The late Harold S. Bender says in *These Are My People*: "The first implication of the concept of the New Testament church is a company of concrete living persons in the flesh, living in time and space, though no longer bound to one geographical area. It is a visible, identifiable human company, not an invisible, mystical phenomenon" (page 14).

*The church was born on Pentecost.*

"The second implication of the concept is that the church is called into being by God. . . . The birth and survival . . . are due alone to God's gracious and faithful action in creating, calling, sustaining, judging and saving it. . . . They are a people only because he dwells within them and moves among them . . . but they come into existence only by a response on their part to his call" (pages 14-16).

In the above context we look at church membership. Whatever helps us to be God's people is our guideline.

The Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada requested that I survey some of the larger CMC churches about their membership policies. Nineteen congregations, representing a membership of 8,971 out of a total CMC membership of 28,247 responded.

The General Conference (most CMC churches are also GC members) is, by choice, a congregationally centered denomination instead of a centralized, authoritarian body. Local churches deal autonomously with spiritual and financial issues. This seems to have worked well now for over 120 years.

Our findings from these 19 congregations, however, suggest some more common church membership procedures. The following topics are suggested for mutual consideration: (1) Each church maintains one official list for purposes of conference commitment. This list should be reviewed and updated annually for baptisms, transfers, withdrawals and dismissals. (2) Inactive members would be, wherever possible, informed of church activities and commitments, either through personal contact or letters and church bulletins. Non-resident members should be urged either to join a believing church where they live or to contribute to their home church or, failing this, to withdraw from the church. Where these methods are unsuccessful, these members should be, after a time limit (preferably not less than three years), removed from the membership list. (3) Churches should establish a class of membership to accommodate students, voluntary service workers and job followers who expect a short stay in the community, i.e. associate membership. This membership could be held for a predetermined length of time (not longer than three years) after which such people would be encouraged to become a permanent member or to withdraw.

Herbert Hamm, a member of our congregation (North Leamington United Mennonite Church) with whom I discussed this survey, suggested we also consider the following as mutual concerns: (1) Wherever possible, the home church should initiate communication with the local church within whose jurisdiction the inactive, non-resident member lives, asking the local church to establish contact with this member. (2) The conference should set up within its structure a board or council of appeal that would give opportunity to inactive members (who have withdrawn from fellowship through local disagreements) to have grievances heard. This would be a counseling and not a legislating body.

Our interest in this article is to encourage further dialogue on this important topic. What is your experience or insight?

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# Are you prepared for MWC?

*Jacob F. Pauls*

Thousands of Canadian and U.S. Mennonites are preparing for a pilgrimage to Strasbourg in southern France this summer to attend the 11th assembly of the Mennonite World Conference. Visas have been obtained, flights reserved, registrations sent in, tours planned and some Bible studies completed.

**Could we be overlooking something?** Contrary to some of our thinking (and planning), MWC is not a massive meeting for Mennonite tourists. MWC is a unique organization with a unique purpose and requires some special preparation. Unlike some other world bodies, it is not a delegate or a decision-making organization. It is not a super Mennonite conference which hands down statements of faith or practice to its member churches. MWC is a voluntary body composed of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches. All members who wish to come are welcome to an experience in worship, sharing and Bible studies. The aim is to become a more faithful church in the world of today.

Being able to meet in Strasbourg is an important factor for those of us who claim the Anabaptist tradition. Here in Strasbourg women and men pioneered in Anabaptism, hammered out in bold testimonies the basis of what it means to be disciples of Jesus. Those were difficult times that produced a rugged people and rugged faith. Since then we have refined and domesticated much, especially the requirements of discipleship. Will we be prepared to meet at Strasbourg to find our roots and to test our faith and commitment? Will we dare to evaluate ourselves by these early pioneers?

Having been dispersed into all the countries of the world, it is important that we meet together and affirm our relationship to each other and to Christ. Are we prepared to do this? Can we dare to overlook the differences of culture, color, material worth and even some convictions in order to stand beside each other as sisters and brothers? When the patriarch Jacob met his brother Esau after many years of estrangement, he had to spend a whole night in preparation, struggling with the angel of the Lord. Then upon meeting Esau he said, "Looking into your eyes is like looking into the eyes of God." Are we prepared to look into each other's eyes and overcome prejudice, fear and individualism? This may take more than one night in preparation.

Bible studies are central to our program and purpose. Are we ready to study God's Word together? Believing that the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to us as we search together as a community of faith, we need to give special heed to this exercise. Are we coming with open minds to search God's will? Will we be able to submit our "superior knowledge" and individual convictions to the scrutiny and reaction of others? Coming as we do from many lands and varying cultural and sociopolitical settings, this exchange in Bible study should provide interesting and provocative discussions. New insights should be a natural expectation on our part. Will we learn to understand what liberation means as those who come from oppressed areas of the world tell us their stories? Will we acknowledge the blessedness and freedom that come with being poor (as Jesus said)? And as those who live in fear for their lives give their testimonies, will we learn the meaning of loving the enemy in the name of Christ? Or will our political securities, our material possessions and our preconceived ideas insulate us against such understandings?

Many people say they go to MWC to meet the people and to benefit from the sharing. It is one of the most beautiful things that often happens when we meet. Sometimes, however, we come to meet only as tourists, being intrigued with the oddities, and that lasts only for a few moments. This is not enough. If each believer is and has a gift of God for the perfecting of the church, then this sharing is a vital dimension of our meeting. But sharing our gifts does not happen automatically or easily. Receiving what others have to give requires grace and humility and does not come naturally to us who are used to being charitable givers. Will we be able to lay aside the proud independence, our material advantages, our acquired knowledge and again become grateful receivers? Furthermore, are we prepared to give of ourselves—our doubts, fears, faith and hope—to our sisters and brothers in the faith?

*A scene from 1978 MWC in Wichita*

A highlight in our week together at MWC is the celebration of the Lord's Supper on the final day. This symbolic act in the setting of thousands, all declaring by a simple gesture that we are one body in Jesus Christ, can be a powerful and unforgettable experience. Sometimes this gesture is a utilitarian one, expressing a polite and superficial niceness to each other and satisfying our own images as Christians. The latter is selfishness and out of order. We must penetrate beyond this to a deeper awareness of each other and a commitment to each other. Can we lay down our fears and prejudices to embrace our sisters and brothers from around the world and become one in Jesus Christ who died for us? Are we ready to renew our pledge to him in this world setting and rise above our earthly loyalties, our personal achievements, our denominational and historical peculiarities?

Are we prepared to return from Strasbourg changed because of the experience? No one can participate in a manner as decribed above without being changed because of it. Change is unsettling and is usually resisted. Unless I am willing to change in some respect for the better, to be made a more faithful disciple of Jesus, I am not yet prepared for Strasbourg.

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## Suffering and joy

**The Glad River** *by Will D. Campbell (Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1982, 310 pages)*

*Reviewed by Arthur Boers, 1945 West 22nd Place, Chicago, IL 60608*

*The Glad River* is a worthy successor to Campbell's *Brother to a Dragonfly*. It is a different book with a different form, fiction rather than autobiography.

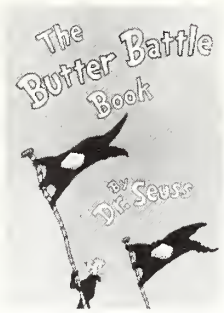
During World War II, "Doops" Momber befriends two men he meets in the Army, Fordache ("Model T") Arceneau and Kingston Smylie. Kingston dares reveal his mixed racial ancestry only to Doops and Model T. Model T, a Cajun-speaking backwoodsman, is mocked for his inability to speak English. Doops, brought up Baptist in a Baptist culture, has resisted pressures since childhood to be baptized. These three, outcasts all, become a community that they call "the neighborhood."

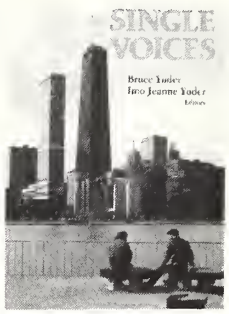
The neighborhood survives the war. Indeed, the three survive because of the neighborhood. Their humor, resilience and resourcefulness enable them to cope with (and laugh at) the banalities of military life. Once the war ends they move to different places and engage in varying pursuits, yet continue to meet monthly.

Doops refuses to be baptized because "there aren't any Baptists left in the world." As a child, he read his pastor's copy of the *Martyrs Mirror*. Knowing no one with the integrity and costly biblical conviction of those Anabaptist martyrs, he finds no true Baptists to baptize him. Ironically, his nickname—derived from the first noises he made as a baby—means "baptize" in Dutch, the language of his respected Anabaptist forbears. Model T and Kingston (both Roman Catholic) are influenced by Doops' biblical faith and his preoccupation with Anabaptist history. Their perspectives and faith heritage impact reciprocally on him.

Their "faithful remnant" self-understanding leads to further nonconformity with the society into which they already did not fit. Model T is charged with a heinous crime on circumstantial evidence. The murder trial is society's forum to accuse and try the neighborhood. On trial is their nonconformity: their refusal to kill in the military, their close male friendships, Model T's rejection of Social Security numbers, Doops' refusal to be baptized, Kingston's racial heritage. In court, Model T refuses to take an oath because Jesus forbade swearing; this jeopardizes him by making him seem more suspicious to the Baptist prosecutor and mostly Baptist jury. The neighborhood's lives, convictions, faith and love are literally a scandal to the Southern society.

*The Glad River* affirms the New Testament teaching that suffering and joy in Christ are inextricably connected. The river of God's faithful and suffering children is a "glad river." This river, ending in God's city, gives us courage to persist. By embracing our grief and suffering (rather than ignoring or avoiding it) it is a river of joy and hope.




## For butter or worse

**The Butter Battle Book** *by Dr. Seuss (Random House, 1984)*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editorial assistant*

Dr. Seuss celebrates his 80th birthday with his 43rd book. *The Butter Battle Book* is in many ways quintessential Seuss, with its rhymed lines, its buildup of proportions from small to ridiculous, its charmingly drawn characters and his zany imagination. However, the cozy, warm, happy ending does not appear. Instead the reader is brought up short, forced to face an all too horrible reality.

*The Butter Battle Book* is clearly an allegory of the cold war between the United States and the Soviet Union, a satirical look at the arms buildup. Here it is the Zooks and the Yooks battling over whether to eat their bread butter side up or butter side down. They threaten each other with weapons, from a Triple-Sling Jigger to an Eight-Nozzled, Elephant-Toted Boom-Blitz to an Utterly Sputter to the Bitsy Big-Boy Boomeroo, which represents the potential of nuclear destruction. We find ourselves laughing at this silliness until the final page, when we realize that the zany world of the Zooks and the Yooks is the same perilous world we live in.

Dr. Seuss was recently awarded a special Pulitzer Prize. It was well-deserved. And *The Butter Battle Book* deserves to be read. Hopefully we can shape our own ending by making peace between the Zooks and Yooks of our world.

## Mennonite singleness

**Single Voices**, *edited by Bruce Yoder and Imo Jeanne Yoder (Herald Press, 1982, 127 pages)*

*Reviewed by Elsie Miller, associate pastor of Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, 655 S. Lorraine, Wichita, KS 67211*

Having read dozens of books on singleness this past decade, I would rank this slim volume with my three favorites: *It's OK to be Single*, edited by Gary R. Collins, *Solo Flight*, edited by Jim Towns, and *Free to Be Single* by Elva McAllaster.

So what has this book to offer that hasn't already been published? It's more recent. Recent books tend to have a broader, deeper, more wholistic perspective, speaking to the heart of issues. Single voices in the Mennonite church are becoming more vocal and articulate, speaking out in a new way, and these voices are heard in this book.

Its seven chapters focus upon a wide range of basic subjects, including relationships, professionalism, "couples society," theology/Scripture, sexuality, church programs and spirituality—written by people who are male (2), female (5), single (6), married (1) and active within today's church.

An added plus is the "reflection and discussion guide" offering penetrating questions to coincide with each chapter, which helps make it an excellent resource or study guide for Sunday school or small groups. I only wish these had been placed at the end of each chapter rather than appearing in one section at the back of the book.

The last chapter on "holy loneliness" is particularly rich in pointing out the benefits of open dialogue between couples and singles as it defines the viewpoint singles bring to this topic as opposed to the insights and experiences brought by couples. Each group has hold of vital theological and spiritual elements, but both are needed to get at the greater truth. Will both viewpoints be spoken, and will they be heard?

# MEDITATION

## Let's add more compassion

Where does compassion fit in for Christians? On the one hand we are called to faithful discipleship, to being light and salt on the earth. On the other hand we are called to receive the mercy and forgiveness of a living God with readiness and thanksgiving. We are called to confront brothers and sisters when we see them in a dangerous spot (Matthew 18), yet we are called not to judge lest we too be judged (Matthew 7). This poses a dilemma. How can Christians live in this tension?

We hear calls from conflicting corners of the church. One calls us to be more traditional, the other to be more adventuresome. One calls us to be more liberal, the other more conservative. One calls us to be quiet, the other to speak out. We are confronted with the call to civil disobedience by some, to be suffering in prayerful silence by others. We are confronted by some to withhold war taxes if we want to be faithful, by others to pay our taxes for the same reason. We are confronted by some to accept gays and lesbians as our brothers and sisters in Christ, by others to do what the Bible clearly says about homosexual people.

While I have my own understanding of what the Spirit is asking me to do in each of these examples, as a church and as Christian people we are often confused by these contradictions within our peoplehood. We want to know what is right. What does the Lord require of us? While some of us long for one voice of authority to tell us what to believe, we no longer have that security. We are each called to respond. The problem is where to begin. We see leaders in the church claiming to follow God's leading but calling us to opposite responses.

One source of help to me has been to reflect on how our forebears responded in similar conflicts. Dress, appearance, millennialism, peace versus evangelism and other issues have caused splits and fights among us. On those issues, as we look back, we see that compassion was often missing. The particular focus may have passed, but the pain and hurt has often lived on due to lack of gentleness and patience.

I have found that my greatest difficulty in following Christ is to love others (and their viewpoints and experiences) as I love myself. I see why Jesus said the greatest commandment is, along with loving God, to love my neighbor as myself. Jesus is known for compassion to all people. Paul calls us to grow in spiritual fruitbearing—gentleness, meekness, kindness, self-control.

It is hard to live deeply in God's love and share that converting love with others. My sinful ways are most often changed when I am compassionately cared about by another person. I have experienced enough judging from others to have built up a system to deal with that. I heap it on top of the pile I have already made by judging myself. But that does not change me. I am changed when God's love flows to me through others in such a way that I am melted and healed.

I continue to work at accepting the Spirit's gentleness so that I become less defensive when I feel threatened. I cringe and weep when I see other hurting people attacked and judged as I have been. I see the hurt grow deeper and the defenses higher.

I believe the way to faithful discipleship is not to call each other to change but to share by listening to each other in compassion. As we hear others, our own understanding and behavior can be informed by the experiences of others.

Let's add more compassion to our lives.

*Keith G. Schrag*

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How does faith grow? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in our midst? Does church membership have meaning even if it is not described in the Bible? Has the whole story been told about Perspective '84?

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# editorial

## *Your fears give you away*

The student of a pacifist teacher suddenly cried out in utter frustration, "But if we did what you suggest, the Russians would destroy us." His teacher replied, "That is not the worst thing that could happen to me." Another student asked, "Well, what is?" He responded, "The worst thing that could happen to me would be for the Russians to separate me from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ. But I know that they can't do that" (Richard Mouw, *My People, I Am Your Security*, p. 35).

Jesus said, ". . . do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do . . . fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell" (Luke 12:4-5).

Fear is a strange element in our lives. Christians confess that "perfect love casts out fear . . . and he who fears is not perfected in love" (1 John 4:18). Yet we all have fears.

You can tell people's maturity by observing what they fear. The bogey-persons change as we change. At age 4 we fear the dentist, at 8 it's the policeman, at 16 the driving examiner, at 18 the college dean or job interviewer, at 25 the loan officer at the bank, at 45 the medical checkup and at 65 our faith assurance.

Eutychus in *Christianity Today* (Jan. 7, 1983, p. 4) says Christian maturity is also reflected in our fears. The non-Christian fears the evangelistic types. A new Christian in church often fears the nominating committee, "which is trying to annihilate clock and calendar with churchianity." The year-old Christian fears the call to tithe.

The charismatics fear the cerebral and cold proclamation of the "straights." Straights fear the fever of the smiling charismatics. Non-charismatics pray with clear diction, are careful to raise one hand at a time, embrace a fellow Christian only if there's been a death in the family and smile only once they're in the car and on the way home. Charismatics doubt the integrity of those who pray in intelligible words and who lift their voices to sing without simultaneously lifting hands.

We sing "Where he leads me, I will follow" and confess our everlasting trust in Jesus who alone can save from sin. And then we shiver in our shoes.

What if communism should advance upon our country? What if some congenial, second-blessed, hand-raising and hugging charismatic should actually join our church? What if someone beside me should pray in a strange tongue? What if some high mass should be the most moving worship experience for me as a Mennonite this year? What if a Catholic marriage encounter should change forever a Mennonite couple to henceforth love one another and be more ready to love their Catholic neighbors?

Horror of horrors, all those ifs would never do. We need our phobias. After all, we must be against something. Fears keep our blood pressure up. Oops, did I mean that? You mean we use fears to maintain our level of Christianity more than we depend on God's Holy Spirit? I believe so. Much of traditional Christianity still builds itself up by putting others down. We fear something they either have or don't have. You can hear it in many sermons and see it in much literature.

According to God's Word that means we need to grow in God's Spirit. God sent Jesus to show us and share with us an abundant life. He leaves us the Holy Spirit to comfort us. In the Old Testament God came time and again to visit his people. In the New Testament God came to be with his people first in the incarnation of his son and then in the enabling presence of his Spirit. If we believe his Word, then we need not fear charismatics, high mass, communism, nuclear power, demonstrators, homosexuals, traditionalists, feminists, fundamentalists or zealous evangelicals.

We can go forth with confidence. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. Faith helps us to contend with our fears and somehow to trust God.

Whatever your fears are today, you can move toward greater maturity. Turn your fear to the Lord in open confession. He won't reject your phobias. Instead, he will share with you the beginning of wisdom (Job 28:28) which will help you to move away from evil fears toward understanding love and faith which lead to life (Proverbs 19:23). *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

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## Inside this issue:

Live above other people's expectations
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Counsel to beginning pastors

# Live above other people's expect

*Weldon Schloneger*

Two old ragged bums were sitting on a park bench, analyzing the reasons for their failure in life. The first said, "I failed because I *never* did what anyone expected of me." The second replied, "I failed because I *always* tried to do what everyone expected of me."

Dealing with the expectations of others is part of being human. Only tiny babies, the critically ill and the most aged adults are excused from having to respond to what other people expect of them.

Bosses at work expect certain standards of production and performance, teachers expect assigned work to be completed, neighbors expect adherence to local standards of property neatness, the church expects commitments of time, energy and money, and our families expect our attention, nurture and support. Though we willingly respond positively to many of these expectations, their accumulated weight can become great.

Even those of us who would never be mistaken for one of the bums on the park bench sometimes respond inappropriately when other people fill our lives with the messages, "You really should do this" or "You simply must not do that."

Some of us may err on the side of assuming that the only way to maintain our sanity in the midst of so many expectations is to tune them all out and do whatever we please.

Others of us may err on the side of assuming that it is our duty to fulfill the wishes of others, no matter what the quantity or quality of the expectations and we burn ourselves out being people-pleasers.

Just as Jesus was tempted in the same ways we are tempted, so too was Jesus the recipient of the same kinds of expectations we face. Jesus' response pattern in these situations provides an outline for our own responses to expectations.

Below are four categories of expectations from others together with responses by Jesus taken from Matthew's Gospel. These incidents from the life of Jesus suggest 12 "learnings."

**Jesus' responses to people's expectations provide a good outline for our responses to others' expectations.**

*Expectation of Jesus: "Do this."*
*Jesus's response:* "Yes."

In this category Jesus fulfills the expectations of others. The story of the two blind men outside the city of Jericho in Matthew 10:29-34 is typical. They cry out to Jesus, "Lord, son of David, have mercy on us." They knew they were in need, they looked to Jesus as the one who could meet that need, and Jesus fulfilled their expectation by touching their eyes and giving them their sight.

At least a dozen times in Matthew, Jesus is approached for healing, and his response to this kind of expectation is always yes. Jesus comes closest to saying no to the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15:21-28, but he finally recognizes her faith and heals her.

In Matthew 8:23-27, Jesus calms the storm at the request of the panicked disciples. In Matthew 13:36f, Jesus responds positively to the disciples' request to explain a parable they couldn't understand.

*Learning #1:* It is always appropriate to respond to the one who comes to you and says, "I hurt, I need help, I lack something. Can you heal me, meet my need, fill up my emptiness?" Though we may be weak at times, God's power is always great, and a yes to such a request is always fitting.

*Expectation of Jesus:* "Don't do this."
*Jesus' response:* "OK, I won't."

Matthew records only one example of this kind. It happens in Matthew 13:53-58, where the folks from Jesus' hometown of Nazareth ask, "Just who does this fellow think he is? We know his family. They're not so special." They gave Jesus no honor and expected little of him. Jesus fulfilled that expectation by doing few miracles there.

*Learning #2:* There are situations where it is appropriate to walk away from a setting where too little is expected and to walk toward settings where one's gifts are recognized and expected to be exercised.

*Expectation of Jesus:* "Do this."
*Jesus' response:* "No."

Matthew records more instances

where Jesus does not fulfill expectations than when he does.

In Matthew 9:14-17 John the Baptist's disciples express their expectation of Jesus that he practice fasting and teach his disciples to do the same. Jesus points out that there is no reason for his disciples to fast now, because he is still with them.

*Learning #3:* Some expectations may be reasonable for another time or another place, but not for here and now. Say no if the timing is wrong.

Matthew 12:38-45 records the Pharisees' demand of Jesus: "Do a sign—let's see you perform a miracle. Prove your power to us." Jesus refuses and gives them a tongue-lashing instead.

*Learning #4:* When people approach you with no admitted needs of their own, but simply want to put you through your paces and demonstrate your professionalism and expertise for its own sake, say no.

In Matthew 20:20-23 Jesus disappoints another expectation. The mother of James and John comes to Jesus and asks that her sons be given the two highest positions in the new kingdom she expects Jesus to set up. Jesus replies, "Only God makes that kind of decision, I cannot grant your request."

*Learning #5:* Don't attempt to fulfill an expectation that arises out of the misunderstanding or selfishness of the one making the request. Also, don't say yes to an expectation that is not in your authority to fulfill.

In Matthew 22:15-22 the Pharisees expect a straight answer from Jesus on a trick question about the payment of taxes. Jesus refuses a simple yes or no answer. He gives an ambiguous answer, one that throws the responsibility for decision making on tax payments back on the questioners.

*Learning #6:* Refuse to give answers to questions when the questioner is not sincerely seeking an answer, but is merely after your answers in order to acquire the power and leverage that comes through possession of information.

Jesus stands accused before Pilate in Matthew 27:11f. After the chief priests and elders recite their complaints against Jesus, Pilate invites Jesus to defend himself. Jesus makes no reply.

*Learning #7:* Though the common expectation of most societies is that self-defense is always a right and a duty, God may call us to even give up the right to explain our behavior. As someone has said, "Never explain. Your friends don't need an explanation and nothing you can say will convince your enemies." When being attacked, our nonresistance is a way of saying no to the expectations of the attacker.

*Expectation of Jesus:* "Don't do this."
*Jesus' response:* "I'll do it anyway."

John the Baptist confronts Jesus in Matthew 3:13-15 with the opinion that it isn't fitting that he, an unworthy desert prophet, should baptize Jesus. Jesus repeats his request.

*Learning #8:* Though people expect to put you on a pedestal and to put themselves somewhere beneath you, don't allow it. Ask such people to minister to you.

It is clear that the expectations of others did not control Jesus' life. The Pharisees were right when they said to Jesus in Matthew 22:16, "We know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are."

Jesus makes clear who it is that sways his life when in Matthew 4:10 he tells the devil in the wilderness, "I worship only the Lord, and it is only him that I serve." As Jesus walked amidst the expectations of others, it was the expectation and call of God that directed his choices.

Through his life of prayer and his constant openness to the Spirit's moving, Jesus was free from compulsively trying to conform to expectations that were inappropriate and was therefore free to respond to the expectations of those who were truly in need.

> "As we grow to accept the Lord's yoke, we experience release from the burden of the yokes that others would have us wear."

The Pharisees criticize Jesus in Matthew 9:10-13 for associating with tax collectors and other assorted sinners. Jesus lets them know that Matthew the tax collector and other such folks will continue to be his friends.

*Learning #9:* When the expectation is that you will concentrate your attention only on "our kind" of people, continue to focus your attention on those that really need you.

In Matthew 12:1-14 the Pharisees direct these expectations at Jesus: "Don't eat that grain, don't heal that man with the shriveled hand; it's the Sabbath."

Jesus allows his disciples to eat and he restores the man's hand.

*Learning #10:* Don't be controlled by human laws. Take with many grains of salt messages like, "Do this because this is how we've always done it here," or, "Don't do this because we never do that here."

Some children begin surrounding Jesus in Matthew 19:13-14, and the disciples expect Jesus to support their efforts in shooing them away. But Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me."

*Learning #11:* Refuse to accept as a priority the needs of people of status over the needs of the small and weak.

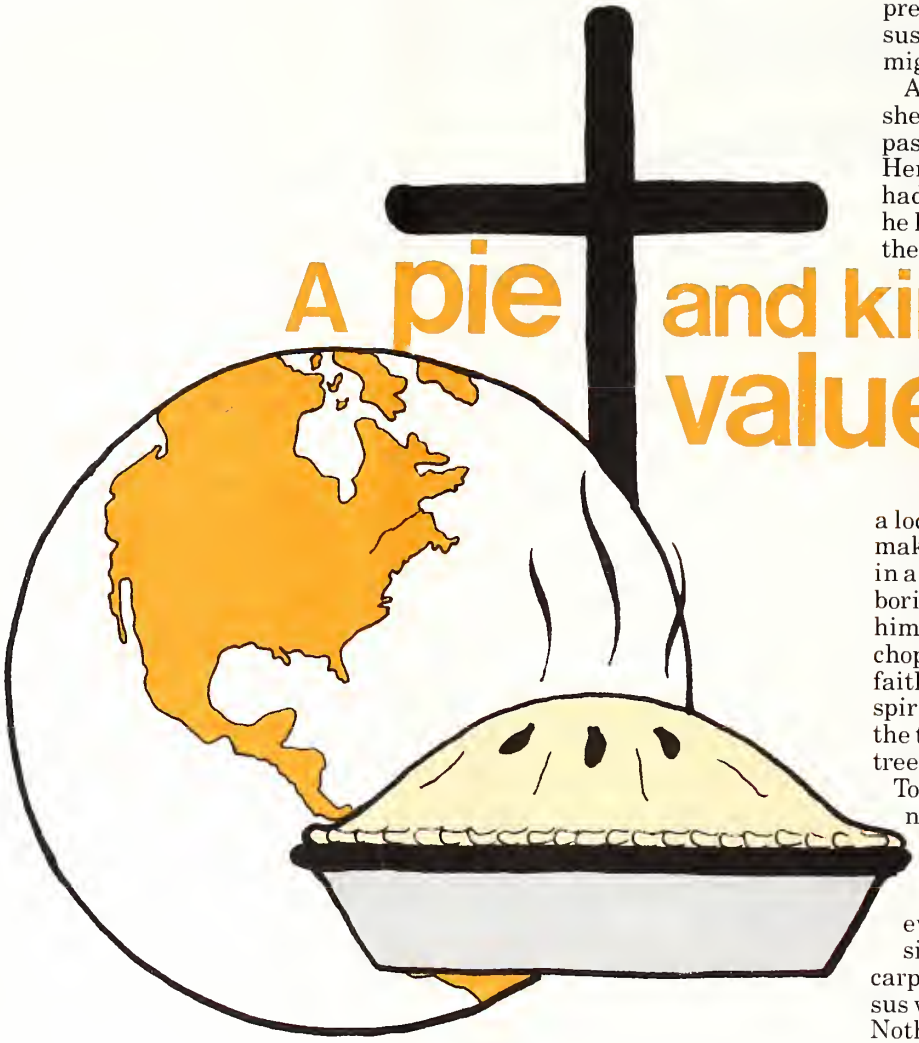
*Learning #12:* Nurture your relationship with God as the central means of discerning which human expectations deserve your positive response.

Jesus' pattern of behavior is not one to follow if our goal is prestige and success as defined by worldly standards. Jesus made enemies because of the way he dealt with expectations. These enemies had him killed.

Had Jesus ignored the expectations of the weak and small and instead fulfilled the expectations of those who wanted him to do tricks, to climb the social, religious and political ladders and to set up an earthly kingdom, he might have avoided the cross.

Though the cross is always a possibility, it is also true that following the expectations of God is less burdensome than attempting to fulfill every human expectation. As Jesus says in Matthew 11:30, "My yoke is easy. My burden is light." As we grow to accept the Lord's yoke, we experience release from the burden of the yokes that others would have us wear. To do the will of God is freedom. •

# A pie and kingdom values



*Henry Rempel*

**The power of Jesus.** The book *Mennonite Safari* tells of Mennonite missions in East Africa. According to David Shenk, son of one of the missionaries, there were difficulties as in any Africa mission during the 1930s. But the mission was also blessed with early converts. Within a few years some Tanzanians took places of leadership, including preaching.

Accepting salvation did not necessarily mean the converts believed Jesus had power to overcome the evil spirits so prevalent in their lives. Shenk tells of missionaries standing by helplessly as a local rainmaker was beaten by villagers. The rainmaker had become a Christian and felt it no longer right to call for rain. Yet, at the height of a drought, they beat the rainmaker until he agreed to call on the spirits for rain. Shenk does not say so, but the missionaries likely had mixed feelings when it began to rain the next day.

Some years after the mission began, a local pastor, Zephania, preached a sermon on the power of Jesus over the spirit world. Zephania claimed their fetishes, which the people believed provided protection against evil spirits, were really of no value. It was a shocking sermon.

The following Sunday Zephania was to preach again in a church 15 miles away. As he guided his bicycle along the path in the early morning light, he struck a cobra. The pastor, his bicycle and the snake became entangled on the ground. The snake thrashed away, striking wildly. Finally it slithered off into the grass.

The pastor searched for a scrap of paper, wanting to write a last note to his wife. As he tried to find the right words, he decided to examine his blood covered leg. To his surprise he could find no signs of a snakebite. With great joy he jumped on his bicycle and pedaled to the church. You can imagine the sermon he preached that morning. The power of Jesus protected him against even the mighty cobra.

After the sermon a woman told how she had dreamt the night before that the pastor would be attacked by a snake. Her husband confirmed the story. She had been so bothered by the dream that he had to restrain her from going into the night to warn the pastor. According to Shenk this was the beginning of the end of the belief in fetishes by Tanzanians.

The use of fetishes was dealt another blow when a local carpenter looking for wood to make a bed started to chop down a tree in a grove considered sacred by a neighboring village. The women threatened him with a great evil if he continued to chop down the tree. The carpenter in faith told them he had no fear of their spirits. He would get the missionary and the two together would cut down the tree.

Together they cut down the tree. That night a group of women circled the carpenter's village much like the Israelites had circled Jericho. Again and again they called down evil curses on the village. The missionaries were frightened, but the carpenter assured them the power of Jesus was adequate to protect the village. Nothing happened to the village.

**The kingdom of God.** Jesus in his time also had a problem of people unwilling to recognize his power. This was especially so for those in positions of authority. Matthew 12 records that scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus with a request for a sign. Jesus' response was that only a sinful and adulterous generation asks for a sign and that no sign would be given to them other than the sign of the prophet Jonah. In Luke 17 we are told the Pharisees came to him wanting to know when the kingdom would appear. Jesus said the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed nor will people say, lo, here it is, or there, for the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

It is not self-evident to the people that the kingdom of God is here. It is not possible to point to a particular project, to a particular place or to a particular thing and say, Look, there is the kingdom of God. Living in the kingdom requires a personal, self-involving response based on faith.

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# How do you propose we decide what is the right size of slice for you and for me?

When alone with his disciples, Jesus proceeded to instruct them further about the kingdom. Among other things, Jesus compared the kingdom to a treasure hidden in a field which, when a man found it, he went in great joy, sold everything he had and bought that field.

A farmer finding treasure in his field likely occurred on occasion. Palestine had a history of changing hands because of war. Without banks and safety deposit boxes it was not uncommon for people to bury their treasures. Some may have been killed, so never came back to collect it. Others might have forgotten exactly where they had buried it.

In this parable the farmer did not own the lands; he was either an employee or renting at the time he found such buried treasure. When he realized what he had found, he knew he could claim it only if he owned the land. He sold everything he had to buy that one piece of land and thus rightfully claim the treasure as his own. The kingdom of heaven is like such a treasure hidden in the field.

Or again, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one of great value went out and sold all that he had and bought it. Now here is a man who makes his living through buying and selling pearls. Selling all he had to buy this one special pearl means he sold his inventory. To hang on to this one pearl meant he had to lose his vocation. For him to possess this one pearl of great value was worth more than his business. The kingdom of heaven is like such a merchant prepared to give up even his livelihood for the pearl of great value.

According to our preaching and according to our testimonies, we possess such a treasure, such a pearl of great value. But have we also placed our faith in the power of Jesus when it comes to the economic aspects of life? Or are there still certain fetishes that we hang on to to protect us in this aspect of our lives? Are we really convinced that Jesus has the power to protect us and take care of us even in this realm?

**A pie.** To try to explain what this might mean, please meditate with me on a pie. Choose your favorite pie. How about a nice big pumpkin pie with six big blobs of whipped cream on it? With that pie it is possible to illustrate two important values in our society. What our society wants more than anything else is to have a *bigger* pie. A secondary concern is to have a *better* pie. Any concern about how the pie is made has a low priority in our society. The second value is illustrated with the way each one of us relates to this pie. Our concern is to get as big a slice of that pie as possible.

The great tragedy of our depression is the vast number of unemployed who are being denied the right to participate in the making of our pie.

**A pie and our values.** If we consider at all how the pie is made, this opens a number of important subjects. We could talk about the use of land by farmers or maybe I should say misuse of land. We cannot continue farming indefinitely with the farm practices now in use. Or we could talk about the destruction of the environment occurring as a result of the way we choose to produce. Or we could talk about our misuse of energy. This would also bring in the nuclear debate.

For me the most immediate concern would be work, the way you and I relate personally to the making of our pie. The Canadian Committee of Catholic Bishops did us a great favor by focusing public attention on this issue. They argued that how we relate to the making of our pie goes right back to creation, where God called us to join him in the responsibility for continuing the creative process he had started. This includes—for our physical, mental and spiritual well-being—the right to be able to participate in the making of our pie. The great tragedy of our depression is the vast number of unemployed who are being denied the right to participate in the making of our pie.

In this doctrine of creation there is more than just the right to work. We are each entitled to the kind of work which shows some creativity, some sense of contributing. Contrast this with many jobs in our society. A number of people are literally dead for the working part of their lives; it is merely a necessary evil that they put up with as a means of earning money so that they can live. Their work is not a vital part of their overall well-being. Each one of us deserves the opportunity to contribute creatively. This is the most important issue in the matter of how the pie is made.

Related to this issue is the right each one of us has to a slice of pie. How do you propose we decide what is the right size of slice for you and for me? The church, desiring to maintain the status quo, has had a specific answer to this question. According to Thomas Aquinas, everyone deserves at least a minimal piece. Beyond that the size of our slice should inform the rest of society how important we are. Your piece should be big enough, relative to the others around you, to enable you to maintain your place on the social ladder.

This approach to dividing the pie is very much alive today. The basic principle on which doctors negotiate for higher fees has nothing to do with increased productivity. It is based on where doctors stand relative to plumbers and the rest of us. Faculty at the University of Manitoba bargain on the same basis. We would have a difficult time justifying a raise if we had to base it on productivity increases. We feel our place in society should be determined by the salaries of professors in the province of Alberta. The university argues that our salaries merely need to keep us one rung above high school teachers in Manitoba.

There are other ways of dividing the pie. We could draw our values from the business world. Whatever you can get is your fair share. The Reagan administration strongly affirms this approach. They argue if achievers get a larger slice this year, there will be a bigger pie in the future, and the poor may then get a larger slice as well. This value is basic to our economic system. We depend on the size of the slice we get to motivate each

of us to work. Our system is premised on each one of us being lazy, and if we could get away with it, none of us would work.

Alternatively we could go to the other extreme. We could draw our values from Karl Marx, who argued that the size of your slice and my slice should be determined by how much each one of us needs. Now that is revolutionary. It's likely too revolutionary for Mennonites.

A middle of the road position would be to follow the example of our mothers. How does mother slice the pie? Basically into equal parts. Sure, if there are smaller children she makes the pieces smaller because they cannot handle as much. She is also sensitive to requests for smaller pieces. Larger pieces or second helpings are permitted only if there is pie left over after everyone has been served. Mothers are concerned for the ongoing existence of the family as a community.

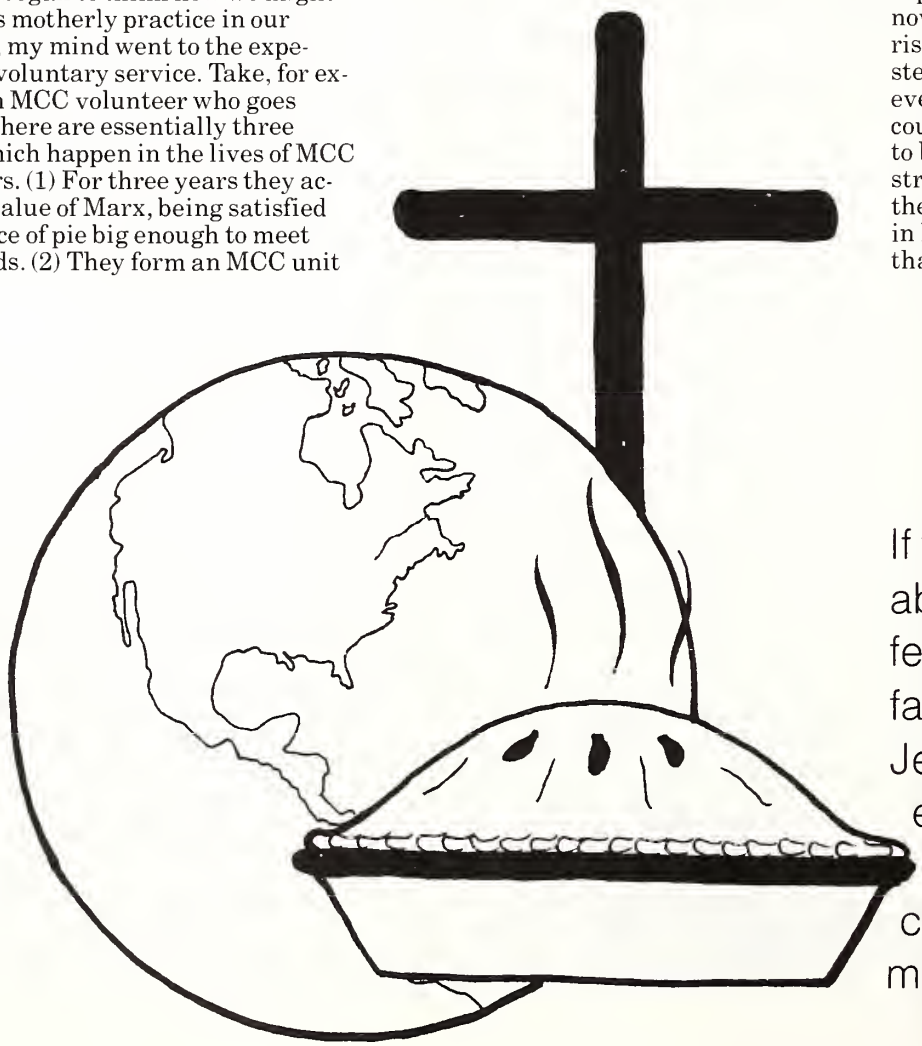
When I began to think how we might apply this motherly practice in our churches, my mind went to the experience of voluntary service. Take, for example, an MCC volunteer who goes abroad. There are essentially three things which happen in the lives of MCC volunteers. (1) For three years they accept the value of Marx, being satisfied with a slice of pie big enough to meet their needs. (2) They form an MCC unit which is a discerning, caring community made up of members who possess the same values and who are dedicated to the same task. (3) They devote themselves to helping people become better makers of pie.

One reason we accept this value of Marx for three years is that it is only a limited period in our life. We know we can make up for it after the three years are over.

Why go that far? Why not go merely as far as our mothers did—to having an equal slice of the pie—and then commit ourselves to this principle as a lifetime vocation? Imagine yourself within a discerning, caring community within which you share equally and the whole community is directing its attention to a particular problem that is immediate and real to the members of the community. With a whole series of such communities, each devoted to demonstrating better ways of making pie, revolutionary changes would occur.

In this manner we could duplicate some of the success stories of our MCC and missionary efforts. It would be another example such as during World War II when God caused a number of young men to devote a brief period of their life to caring for the mentally ill. Out of this experience grew a whole new approach to delivering mental health care. The experience at Warman, Sask., is another example of how a dedicated, concerted effort can successfully counter the power of a large corporation such as Eldorado Nuclear.

These are the kinds of things which can happen if we direct our attention as members of a community to particular aspects of what is wrong in the way we now make society's pie. If we are able to rise above our reliance on fetishes and to step out in faith in the power of Jesus even in the area of economics, then we could demonstrate creative ways of how to better make pie. We could demonstrate to the people of this world that there are much more important things in life than how big is the slice of pie that I am going to get. •



If we are able to rise above our reliance on fetishes and to step out in faith in the power of Jesus even in the area of economics, then we could demonstrate creative ways of how to make better pie.

# Wisdom: fearing the Lord

*Ted VanderEnde*

*"Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27b).*

The ancient cultures of Solomon's days all sought wisdom. We know this from the works of wisdom found in Egypt and Mesopotamia and other regions around Israel. Some of these works read like Proverbs or Job. For instance, the Egyptian "Teaching of Amen-em-ope(t)" sounds like Proverbs 22:17—24:22. It seems that a common source of wisdom was available throughout the Ancient Near East. The wise of old Babylon taught, "He who grieves with the people of his village shall also rejoice with them." Such and many other statements still delight the modern reader (though vulgar sayings are part of this literature as well). Scripture also makes it clear that wisdom was a common property. Solomon, compared to the wise of his days, exceeded them all in wisdom. The Queen of Sheba investigated and agreed (1 Kings 10). The royal court in particular became the center of wisdom, for it was the king who needed understanding and skill to rule his people. Bright young people were gathered in the palace (like Daniel and his friends) to be prepared to govern.

There is a great contrast, however, between the wisdom of Israel and the wisdom of other nations. Nowhere in ancient wisdom literature do we find a parallel statement to the biblical axiom, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7, 9:10, Psalm 111:10, Ecclesiastes 12:13, Job 28:28). It is unique for Proverbs to state, "For the Lord gives wisdom and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding" (2:6). Though pagan wisdom is definitely religious, no secular wisdom makes a living relationship with the only true God the sole basis for wisdom.

This concept of the fear of the Lord links the wisdom literature of the Bible with the other great segments: *The Old Testament law*, "And now, O Israel, what does the Lord God ask of you but to fear the Lord your God. . ." (Deuteronomy 10:12ff and many other passages). *The prophets*, "The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge: The fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure" (Isaiah 33:6 and many other passages). *The Gospels*, where Jesus makes it clear "not to fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28). *The New Testament epistles* ask the believer to "fear Christ" (Ephesians 5:21; see also Philippians 2:2, Hebrews 4:1 and 12:28, 29). In the eternal kingdom to come the saints will sing, "Great and marvelous are your works, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?" (Revelation 15:3, 4). Though the world may produce wisdom and beauty, it nevertheless misses ultimate purpose for it is not rooted in the fear of God.

Biblical wisdom literature teachès us the best that man can offer lacks true wisdom unless it is acknowledged as a gift from God. To write beautiful music as an expression of mere humanity apart from acknowledgment to the Creator becomes a path of death. Science, made possible by the God of order, becomes a burden to God when his name is not honored. It is the wisdom of the Bible that says, "If you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do it to the glory of God."

For this reason the Bible teaches that apart from the wisdom that is in Christ the worldly wisdom of this age is foolishness in the sight of God (1 Corinthians 1-3). Humanism is so tragic because it leaves out the true source of its insights. And similarly to seek a peace apart from the fear of the Lord is ultimately a denial of the God of peace and must lead to death instead of life. James therefore says we should ask the heavenly Father for wisdom, for he is the only true source. This wisdom is pure, peaceloving and makes "peacemakers who sow in peace a harvest of righteousness." Without the fear of the Lord there is no lasting wisdom, without the source of life there is no true peace (James 1, 3). In the final analysis the world gives a pseudo peace, but Christ offers lasting rest (John 14:27).

This fear of the Lord upon which true wisdom is founded has nothing to do with being afraid of the Lord. In Exodus 20:20 Moses makes it clear in a wordplay that fearing the Lord is not the same as being frightened. Instead, this godly fear produces a love for God, a service unto God and a delight in his works and words (Deuteronomy 10:12-17). It is a fear which embraces the love that keeps Christ's commandments.

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# God's grace and my familiar stranger

*Anonymous by request*

Chatting with you after morning worship, I wonder. What would you say? Our conversation is light, checking in on one another's weeks as old friends do. We exchange anecdotes about the kids and concerns about upcoming pressures at work. Our sisterhood is strong in the Lord. As your arm rests casually on my shoulder, my muscles tense at the thought. Would you touch me if you knew my husband is gay? Would this warmth be snuffed out in a chill wind? If you knew, would you shut us out of this fellowship?

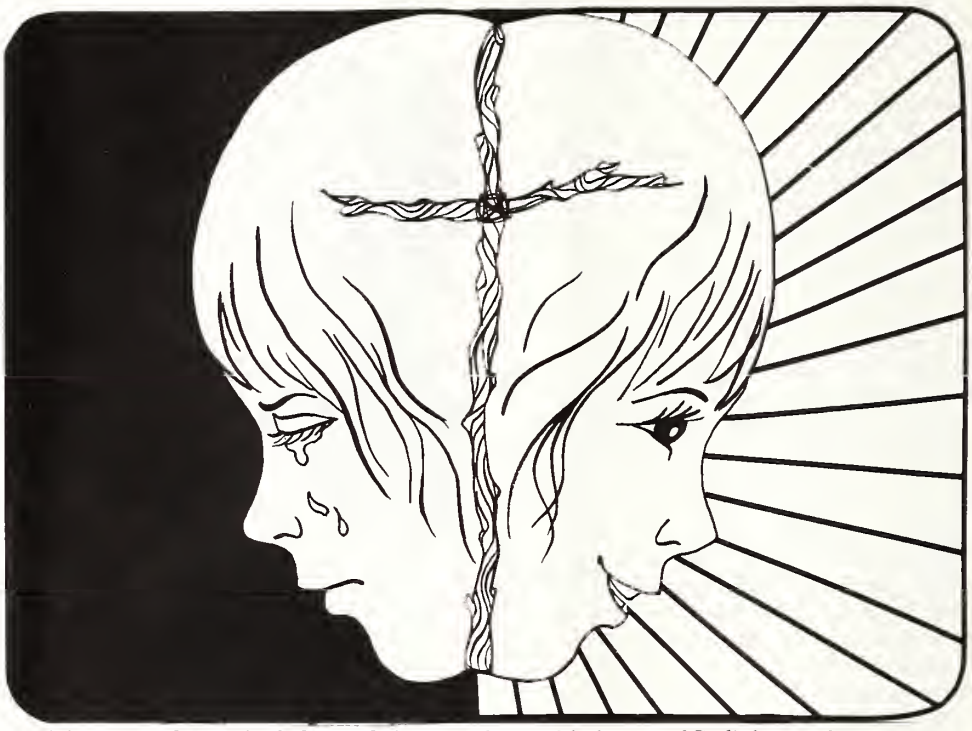
I used to consider homosexuality the modern-day leprosy in the Christian church. Personally I wouldn't have touched the subject (much less a gay person) had I not been propelled into the artistic community in college. My feelings probably reflected the sentiments of many readers of *The Mennonite*. Reading an inspiring article on a justice issue would be more pleasing than a piece on homosexuality.

My energies flow naturally toward those who speak my language, act in predictable ways and keep me comfortable. So how do I respond when a dear friend reveals a vast piece of inner foreign territory by affirming a homosexual orientation?

My husband and I had one of those platonic relationships that blossom during college years. Part of my understanding of his homosexual tendencies when we married was that he was in a great healing process (as his Christian counselor put it). And our heterosexual bonding would be an important part of that process. Christian books told us that being gay was a sin, a blemish, a distortion of God's creation. The solution? Stuff all those feelings and cultivate a heterosexual relationship. Be on your knees a lot. Pray for healing and miraculously you'll no longer be a cripple.

That worked for a while. At least I thought healing was taking place. His gayness didn't seem to be an issue in our marriage. I secretly heaved a sigh of relief that we were not only making it but were becoming a strong, safe couple with honesty and care becoming our hallmark with peers.

My husband's version of the first five years of our marriage is in striking contrast to mine. Puzzled that his same sex attraction was not magically undergoing transformation, his self-image took a nosedive. Any expressions of closeness from male friends had to be held at arm's length. And there was always the feeling of being out of step with the rest of God's humanity. We went on with our model marriage with a part of him dying inside.



*And there was always the feeling of being out of step with the rest of God's humanity.*

The authentic togetherness of our relationship began when we dared to take his sexuality seriously as a component of our marriage that God might be asking us to accept and to respond to creatively.

We began to see that his sensitivity, his gentleness and his disinterest in the traditional male expectations were all character traits that had initially drawn me to him and had helped to make our marriage egalitarian and mutually affirming.

At times I feverishly tried to spruce up my love offering to him, thinking I must not be a good enough companion. I lost some weight, rediscovered the skirts hiding in the back of the closet and attempted to make our sex life more exciting. He patiently dispelled most of my feelings of inadequacy.

As my awareness of his feelings became sensitized, crude jokes and derogatory remarks about gays uttered in cleverness by Christian friends became alienating jabs to me. Slowly I began to understand and share the aloneness he had been feeling for years. He so often wondered, "If they knew who I really am, would my talents be discounted and my person rejected?"

There have been times when my commitment to God and our children have been the only threads keeping me from leaving the relationship. The pain of feeling like second choice has sometimes lured me into valleys of self-pity and anger. Initially I dealt with those feelings in isolation, not daring to divulge so awesome a secret with anyone. Incredibly deep wells of bitterness grew and festered like a nasty wound. I used his gayness to blame him for everything that went wrong, for every idiosyncrasy that had ever irritated me about him. I hated him for not being the person I thought he was, for not conforming and for not ignoring his feelings. Only when I dared to confide in one or two close friends did the anger begin to dissipate. I slowly came to the realization that no

marriage is free from threats to its stability. No one person is capable of meeting another person's entire list of needs. I came to see again the richness of being part of a community of believers.

Those of us who function out of a primarily heterosexual orientation often cannot get beyond seeing homosexuals as willful sinners. Could I force myself to become lefthanded or have red hair or prefer olives over chocolate? I find that brothers and sisters who are most concerned to live out the gospel in a legalistic, prescribed manner are the most critical of gays. It is so easy to search the Bible to prove yourself right and neglect to see the grace which allows each of us yet another day to receive God's nurturing love.

We heterosexuals seem to be waiting for the healing of the lepers by their own hand and their own will. Only then would we deem it safe to extend to them our acceptance, only as they conform to our ranks could we see them as part of the kingdom.

Isaiah speaks of the time of Jubilee when true kingdom growth will take root. Then the wind of the Spirit will blow the gentle message of grace, of forgiveness for differences, over a land parched and dying from the heat of judgment and condemnation. Our Mennonite churches are at a crossroads. Will we shrivel and die with our message to the world of elitism and conformity? Or will our church blossom and grow as we open ourselves as a people of mutual vulnerability and healing?

*It is so easy to search the Bible to prove yourself right and neglect to see the grace which allows each of us yet another day to receive God's nurturing love.*

In a society where the actual laying down of one's life for another is termed senseless and absurd, I have decided to mirror God's unconditional love for me in my commitment to someone very familiar yet very foreign. I am learning to let go of my rules, my expectations and my agenda for another human being. I cannot predict what shape our marriage will take in the coming years. Nor could Paul predict what shape his church would take when God asked him to baptize Lydia into the community of faith.

Perhaps it's time all of us take a look at who is in need of healing.

*While the author has requested anonymity,* The Mennonite *is prepared to pass any special letters directly on to her. Simply send them to us and mark them for forwarding.*


## Job opening

**A resident camp director** is required for Camp Moose Lake, 140 miles southeast of Winnipeg. Major responsibilities will be in the areas of management, promotions and maintenance.

Opening effective **Sept. 1, 1984**.

For more information contact:
Camps with Meaning
1483 Pembina Highway
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## Youth minister needed

Position available **September 1984**.

Full-time youth minister to serve Central District Conference (East) and Camp Friedenswald.

Send resume with references to:
Steve Amstutz
404 E. Montroe
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**before June 20**.

...and
# When They Shall Ask

*A dramatic 90-minute documentary film on the history of the Russian Mennonites*

PREMIERE SHOWINGS

| | |
|---|---|
| Scottdale, Pa. | **Scottdale Mennonite Church**<br>Wednesday, June 6<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Marion, Pa. | **Lighthouse Youth Center**<br>Thursday, June 7<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Lancaster, Pa. | **Lancaster Mennonite High School**<br>Friday-Saturday, June 8-9<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Lansdale, Pa. | **Christopher Dock High School**<br>Sunday, June 10<br>3:00, 8:00 p.m. |
| Harrisonburg, Va. | **EMC Chapel Auditorium**<br>Monday-Tuesday, June 11-12<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Berne, Ind. | **First Mennonite Church**<br>Thursday, June 14<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Normal, Ill. | **Mennonite Church of Normal**<br>Friday, June 15<br>8:00 p.m. |
| Kalona, Iowa | **Iowa Mennonite School**<br>Saturday, June 16<br>8:00 p.m. |

Ticket Information

*Check local announcements for the ticket outlets in your community, or contact:*

Mennonite Media Society
202-1695 Henderson Highway
Winnipeg, MB R2G 1P1
Phone: (204) 661-2483

**1984 Silver Screen Award Winner**

**The U.S. Defense Department** gets "a large and increasing share of the federal budget," according to a new study from the Congressional Budget Office. The CBO said the military research and development (R&D) budget has nearly doubled since 1980, but non-military R&D spending decreased. As a result, more than two-thirds of government research dollars are now controlled by the military. This growing military research program emphasizes "construction and testing of prototypes for advanced weaponry," according to the CBO.

**"Peace Church Evangelism"** will be the theme of the annual Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section Assembly, to be held Nov. 2-3 at Berne, Ind. The assembly is open to the public. Spirituality and children's peace education, as well as evangelism, will be major topics at the conference. The keynote speaker on evangelism and peacemaking will be Art McPhee of Needham, Mass. Gloria Miller of Hartford, S.D., will speak on parenting for peace and justice. The speaker on the spirituality theme has not been announced. To register for the assembly write to Lynn Liechty, First Mennonite Church, Berne, IN 46711.

# NEWS

## Video-Com 84 calls for education, advocacy

Goshen, Ind. (Meetinghouse)—After three days of studying the relationship of the church to emerging communications technologies, especially video, representatives of five Brethren and Mennonite church groups concluded that the Inter-Mennonite Media Group should step up its activity in the areas of congregational education and media advocacy.

More than 100 U.S. and Canadian church administrators, educators and communicators from the Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church and Mennonite Church took part in "Video-Com 84" at Goshen College May 8-10. Their recommendations for an enlarged mandate for IMMG will be sent to program boards in each of the five denominations, which then must decide whether to support the directions with budget and staff time.

*(Left to right) Stuart Showalter moderates a panel discussion featuring Paul Gingrich, Mark Kelley, Laurence Martin, Howard Royer and Waldo Neufeld on video options for Brethren and Mennonite churches.*

The consultation's consensus favoring more education and advocacy in the area of new communications technologies was the result of plenary sessions, small group discussions and denominational caucuses on the coming "information age" and the church's role in it.

In specific terms, confab participants asked that IMMG make Television Awareness Training and "media literacy" part of their education efforts. That literacy would include understanding of how existing technologies can be used by local congregations to augment their ministries and how new technologies will affect First World societies and their churches in the near future.

In the area of advocacy, consultants said, IMMG should help local groups negotiate equitable contracts between cable operators and municipalities, use public access channels provided by cable systems and otherwise guard the rights of the poor and disadvantaged in the midst of the coming "information explosion."

Aside from the large and small group discussions, Video-Com participants were guided in their decision making by addresses from Frances Forde Plude, Emerson College, Boston; Clifford Christians, University of Illinois at Urbana; Elizabeth Thoman, editor of *Media & Values*, Los Angeles; and Diane Zimmerman Umble, Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

During the consultation's first plenary session, Plude emphasized the importance of using video technology to meet human need at the local level. "Church leaders should ask the question, 'What are the needs of our ministries and our people?' and then ask the question of how to package the answers," she said. "Don't be seduced by the glamour [of the new technologies]. Roll up your sleeves and get on with the task of meeting needs."

Plude warned the consultation that the fast pace at which new communications technologies are emerging is producing "a big, bad business world out there. Churches need to critique that world and those technologies, then do it better."

The possibilities for church use of interactive communications, Plude said, is most promising because television viewers want dialogical communication. "The enormous success of TV evangelists in getting their audiences to contribute money to their ministries shows that viewers want to be a part of what they're viewing. This should be an important factor in shaping your plans for the future."

**The third Independent Living Centre** in Canada opened its doors in Calgary on May 1. The centre, which is supported by the Calgary Action Group of the Disabled and Mennonite Central Committee Alberta, will undertake an 18-month project of community education and advocacy for disabled people under the direction of full-time coordinator Muriel Keeling. The other MCC-supported centres are in Kitchener/Waterloo, Ont., and Winnipeg. The Independent Living Centre Movement advocates a self-help and self-determination philosophy for disabled people.

**Mediation 1984,** a national workshop to be held June 15-17 at York University, Toronto, is "a training event," said Dean Peachey, workshop coordinator. It will provide plenary sessions and four workshop tracks on mediation skills, program development skills, mediation for young offenders and family mediation (primarily divorce and separation). Dave Worth, director of Victim Offender Ministries, MCC Canada, will speak on "Putting Justice Back into the System." Registration costs, including meals and housing, are $100. For information write Community Justice Initiatives, 298 Frederick St., Kitchener, ON N2H 2N5, phone (519) 744-6549.

**One out of five children** and one out of two black children now live in poverty-stricken families in the United States, reports a U.S. House of Representatives' committee. The study, conducted by the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families, said the scope and speed of recent social and economic changes "are of a magnitude unprecedented in our lifetime."

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Clifford Christians gave added support to the need for two-way communicative capability in planning church use of the new technologies. "The only communications theory that is compatible with *agape* is the dialogic. . . . Christian communicators ought to be animated by agape and guided by the dialogic and in that way be committed to both. New media structures today are morally legitimate only if they are consistent with the dialogic principle."

Christians gave five practical applications of this principle, which he said were "specific to the domain of new technologies": (1) assuring democratic participation in the flow of information and equal access of each person to basic services; (2) development of an ethic of global solidarity which would allow free exchange of information among developed and developing countries; (3) control over the monopolization of information; (4) the need for more software that "celebrates the world and the history over which Christ is Lord"; and (5) enabling people toward a fuller understanding of media.

The most basic challenge for the church, he said, was in finding "a sure direction so that we are not overly dazzled or immobilized by the new technologies as they develop."

During a point/counterpoint discussion on the effects of new technological systems, Diane Zimmerman Umble noted that Mennonites need to balance their acquisition of technology with their heritage of non-conformity and simplicity. Insuring that non-conformity is an option in an information age will be a challenge in itself. "How do we maintain a tradition of community when we live in a world whose very tools militate against that community?" she asked.

*Frances Forde Plude, Emerson College, Boston, addresses the consultation on technological developments in communications within the next five years.*

Yet after calling for more education of church members in the "visual languages," Umble admitted her bias by stating that "Mennonites are still only half-heartedly involved in the media. Many are tempted to leave them alone. However, it is time to stop dabbling in this field and commit more of our energies to it."

Sister Elizabeth Thoman echoed similar concerns about the need for dialogic communication as were heard from Christians a day earlier, then turned to Umble's concerns about community. Certain qualities of modern-day video technologies can, she said, be harnessed to propagate Brethren and Mennonite values. Among those qualities are the immediacy, simplicity and intimacy of video, all of which can enhance, not destroy, the churches' emphasis on community and dialogue.

"Above all, don't fall victim to an intellectual snobbery about the use of video in your work," Thoman said. "Instead, let's look at what video does well. Video is a ministry, not a luxury we can do without." *Larry Cornies*

## GC receipts at 12.7 percent

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Giving to General Conference Mennonite Church ministries through the first quarter of fiscal 1984 totaled $686,825, or 12.7 percent of the conference's $5,408,000 budget.

On a percent-of-budget basis, that amount is roughly even with the experience of past years. A strong income in April helped offset a sluggish February and March, when contributions fell $45,000 short of last year's figure.

A breakdown of giving through April 30 runs as follows: Commission on Overseas Mission, $468,898 (13.3 percent of its budget); Commission on Home Ministries, $112,406 (11.4 percent); Commission on Education, $49,754 (11.4 percent); and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, $55,767 (12 percent). Over the same period, the conference's Women in Mission took in $44,144, or 17.6 percent of its budget.


## Couple wanted

A Christian couple to provide a family-type setting at **Carmel House**, a MCC Saskatchewan sponsored group home in Saskatoon.

Houseparents will be responsible for up to five boys ages 12-16 with some behavioral problems. Related experience is preferred.

Duties to commence **July 15, 1984**.

Send application to:
Otto Driedger
410 Needham Way
Saskatoon, SK S7M 4X7
Phone (306) 384-3808
**by June 15**.

**All the Mennonite churches** in Calgary held a joint Good Friday service April 20. Jacob Wiebe of First Mennonite Church spoke from John 19:17-19. A choir of more than 80 sang several selections. A communion service was led by Henry Willms of the Dalhousie Mennonite Brethren Church, and an offering was taken for MCC world relief.

**Mennonite Mutual Aid's** first mutual aid forum provided a "strong step forward for setting up the local church process of sharing, and establishing good working relations with MMA staff," said Laban Peachey, Mutual Aid Minister. Altogether, 95 people—including pastors, administrative leaders, congregational representatives, conference ministers and spouses—from 60 congregations in Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon attended the forum held in Salem, Ore., April 13-15. Participants represented the Mennonite Church, General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ and other unaffiliated denominations.

*From left, Walter Klaassen, Pauline Bauman and Peter Dyck, who were recognized for their contributions to Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. All three joined the faculty in 1964.*

# Eastern District Conference approves hiring of youth worker

Richfield, Pa.—The hiring of a full-time district youth worker was unanimously approved by the delegates to the 186th Eastern District Conference sessions at Richfield Mennonite Church, May 3-5. This will be the first full-time staff person hired directly by the conference, which also employs a part-time conference pastor.

This position combines the roles of youth worker, peace education worker and Camp Men-O-Lan youth program director and is supported by three of the conference committees.

The development of this position began several years ago when the Eastern District education and publication committee began to identify the need for a staff person to coordinate youth activities in the district and in the local congregations. Meanwhile, the Men-O-Lan board of directors was also identifying the need for a program director who would not only direct the five-week summer camp program but would also be available year round to participate in program planning and follow-up work.

The two committees elected to combine their needs with that of the peace and social concerns committee, which had employed a quarter-time peace education worker for several years, to create the new full-time position.

The atmosphere at this year's conference was one of unity and cooperation in contrast to the several years when controversy over the issue of women's ordination electrified the atmosphere.

The issue was never openly debated this year but was alluded to by a resolution proposed by Conewago Community Chapel. This resolution claimed that the disagreement in the conference over the ordination of women and homosexuality was indicative of a more serious problem of a low view of Scripture. It called upon the conference to affirm the belief in "the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible" and called upon those who do not hold such a view to repent (i.e. have a change of mind) or resign from places of leadership.

This wording was in reference to the resolution proposed by Conewago and tabled the previous year, which stated that the ordination of women is disobedient to the Word of God and requested that all Eastern District Conference churches who had ordained women in the past should recall and annul these ordinations.

The conference rejected this year's Conewago resolution and passed a substitute resolution that affirmed the belief in "the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God" but called for further clarification and dialogue regarding the concerns presented by the Conewago congregation.

In other conference business, Carlton Minnis, pastor of Second Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, reported that his church has been selected as a pilot site for an inter-Mennonite economic development project. The purpose of this project is to build a strong economic base in the area surrounding an inner-city church as an anchor for the community.

Second Mennonite Church hopes to establish a laundromat near their church and employ several of their church members. Profits would be reinvested in the economic development of the area.

Robert W. Miller, administrator of Frederick (Pa.) Mennonite Home, reported on the significant loss of revenue being suffered by the home due to the inadequate reimbursement structure for medical assistance patients. This long-term problem increased in severity in 1983 when the state tightened the definition of skilled nursing care for reimbursement purposes. Many patients who had previously been classified as needing skilled care were reclassified as needing only intermediate care.

Miller challenged each Eastern District congregation to contribute additional funds to the home equivalent to the non-reimbursed costs of caring for one intermediate care medical assistance patient per year. Currently the home cannot accept additional medical assistance patients without this type of support.

Conference treasurer Julian Hagin reported that 89.7 percent of the 1983-84 budget had been received. Nevertheless, the conference unanimously approved a 1984-85 budget of $138,300 for an increase of 4.4 percent over the previous year. The approved budget equals $29.67 per conference member.

David Bartow, pastor of Upper Milford Church, Zionsville, Pa., was elected to a two-year term as Eastern District president. He succeeds Wilmer B. Denlinger, pastor of Lower Skippack Church, Skippack, Pa. Elected as vice president was Milton Harder, pastor of Grace Church, Lansdale, Pa. Diane Bleam, a member of East Swamp Church, Quakertown, Pa., was elected secretary.

The conference speaker was George Kimber, a member of the faculty of Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. Kimber's messages centered on the themes of faith, discipleship and prayer.

"God does not deliver us from all our trials, but he delivers us out of them," Kimber said. "Don't be moaning about your condition; let it drive you to God.

"We need to begin to develop in our churches a consistency of what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ," he declared. "We have yet to know how to be one disciple in the body of Christ so that when one suffers all suffer," he said.

Next year's conference will be held at Pine Grove Church, Bowmansville, Pa. The speaker will be J. W. Sprunger, executive secretary of the General Conference's Commission on Education.

*Curtis D. Bauman*

THE MENNONITE
COM EDITION

# COMMENTS

## ZAIRE: It Was Worth It!

Many times during our first term in Zaire we questioned our going. Why were we there? Had God really called us to Zaire? Were we really needed by the Zairian Church or were we just filling a need of the North American Church to send out missionaries?

Our first step in going to Zaire was French language study in Brussels, Belgium. In many ways French study was a very discouraging and frustrating time for both of us. Many times it seemed hopeless. At the beginning we wondered how people even made those strange sounds. Our mouths did not want to cooperate. Each week our goals were to see how much of the French church service we could understand and to practice some of the things we learned with our friends there.

It was humiliating to feel like two-year-olds when we could not express ourselves the way we wanted to. But even with all our struggles and doubts with language study, after eleven months in Belgium, we were able to communicate in French. We could not correctly use all sixteen verb tenses and moods, nor could we understand everything we heard. But in spite of our mistakes in pronounciation of words, people could understand us and we could make ourselves understood. That was a good feeling.

Upon arriving in Zaire, our first assignment was to learn to communicate in Tshiluba, the predominate language in the area where we were assigned to work. Although we could speak French with the more educated people, we soon realized that to become involved in the people's daily and church life, it would be necessary for us to know Tshiluba.

We delved into our Tshiluba lessons, but not with a great deal of motivation or excitement. We had just come to the point in our French where we were really beginning to enjoy communicating and where we could understand French church services. We wanted to use French and continue to improve it. In Tshiluba we were again at the beginning—trying to make and understand new sounds, sitting again through church services with little comprehension, memorizing vocabulary, and conjugating verbs.

After formally working on Tshiluba for a little over six months we had language study fatigue and felt that we needed to be doing something for once. We moved from the village mission station setting to Kananga, a city of over 500,000. Our assignment given us by the Zairian Mennonite Church was urban ministries and leadership training plus purchasing needed supplies for missionaries and the Zairian church primarily located in rural areas.

Our time in Zaire did indeed produce more questions than answers. We identified with the poster which reads, "Just when I had all the answers, they changed the questions." The problems of corruption, power struggles, and tribal factionalism seemed insurmountable.

*Dennis and Dianne Schmidt in Zaire*

We arrived in Kananga during a particularly low time in the church there. A leading pastor was in the process of being disciplined for embezzlement. This caused divisions and unrest in the church. On several occasions our Zairian friends shared with us how they regretted the fact that we were initiated as first-term missionaries during this time. What could we do? How were we to respond?

We also wondered what our standard of living should be in view of the poverty all around us. How were we, as people who had so much, to live among people who had so little? How should we respond to beggars coming to our door asking for food and money? or to other people asking us to get for them film, cameras, radios, tape recorders, and motorcycles from the United States? Certain individuals seemed to take advantage of us.

We struggled with attitudes and lifestyles of other missionaries. On first arrival we were quick to criticize certain missionaries for their pessimistic attitude toward Zaire and Zairians in general. It appeared they had very little to say that was positive and considered the whole situation in Zaire as hopeless and beyond change. However, the longer we

# LATIN AMERICA: Women's Congress

The Congress opened with a touching service. Representatives from each Latin American country entered a darkened auditorium to the music of their national anthem, wearing the national dress and carrying the national flag.

All the country representatives brought some typical items of interest made in their country to comprise fascinating displays which depicted, in part, life in that country. We listened to many revealing reports of activities and projects completed, stressful situations, and growth and healing taking place. We shared in meaningful worship experiences, participated in hearty beautiful singing, and jointly delved into the Book of Hebrews for study each day. We were challenged many times over to be "light" and "salt" in our world of oppression, violence, and much suffering.

The Congress ended in the same manner as it had opened, reminding us all that we were returning to our specific countries with a purpose. What beauty and challenge in the vastness of Latin America!

It was an encouragement to see and be a part of such a large group of women involved in the mission of LOVE, seeking to build up, in some cases having to cope, but in all instances, trying to be change agents.

IRENE SUDERMAN

*Irene Suderman recently attended the Latin America Women's Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina, along with a group of Bolivian Baptist women. The four days at the Congress were spent on a college campus, along with as many as 2,000 women from 18 Central and South American countries. Irene continues with a ministry to the wives of the seminary students at the National Baptist Seminary in Cochabamba, Bolivia. She particularly enjoys teaching piano to six students as well as regularly helping with the seminary choir.*

**ZAIRE: Continued**

were there, the more we could see these attitudes coming out in us as well. We struggled to keep from being negative and putting people in boxes.

Even though at times the problems seemed overwhelming and we felt like giving up, we look back at the overall experience as a time of real growth for us. Living in a culture very different from our own was a very enriching experience. It helped us look at our own values and ways of doing things in a new way. We learned from the Zairian culture that people have priority over programs. Being is more important than doing.

It was worthwhile to get to know individuals from a completely different culture as personal friends. We found friends who accepted us as part of them and shared with us what they had. They cared for us in our needs and visited us when we were sick. They were patient with us and took time to explain things from their culture that didn't make sense to us.

In spite of the problems, we found people with a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and the Church. Their worship services were full of life and enthusiasm. It seemed as if being together in fellowship produced a joy that helped overcome the harsh realities of their living situations. We often felt put to shame and shallow in our own commitment. They had so much to teach us if we were willing to learn.

Our questions have not all been answered and some probably never will be. The problems and struggles in Zaire continue but because of the people we were able to be a part of, we count our time in Zaire as infinitely worthwhile. We have grown as a result of these relationships. It is because of these brothers and sisters in Christ, not our vain desire to solve all the problems, that we look forward to returning to Zaire. We want to live and work in partnership with them for the fulfillment of God's purposes in Zaire.

DENNIS AND DIANNE SCHMIDT, AIMM

# LESOTHO: What a Celebration!

Last Sunday we attended the ordination of Mr. Mohono, one of the men in the church we usually attend here in the village of Tabola. What a celebration!

Preparations began early in the week and excitement mounted as the day came nearer. I spent one day baking cookies at Mohonos'. John spent part of a day doing odd bits of repair around their house. Others painted, laid new linoleum, baked mounds of steam bread, and cleaned every corner of the place. On the day before the ordination, two cows and two sheep were slaughtered and cooked.

Friday night the first people began to arrive. That evening there was also a long service at the church. There were more than 50 people who had arrived from Botswana who needed a place to sleep. We were happy that we could help with accommodations and we put up four men for the night.

Preparations and celebrations continued the next day and by evening the number of people who needed accommodations had risen considerably. We had nine men sleeping in our house that night. Not that we have that many guest beds, but they lay down wherever they could find some space. Mr. and Mrs. Mohono gave up their bed. It was shared by five pastors while Mr. Mohono slept on the floor beside the bed.

Sunday morning dawned and people arrived in great numbers. The three tents had been set up in a triangle with the speakers' table in the middle of the triangle. The actual ordination took place early in the program after which speeches and singing continued for another four hours. The celebration was actually cut short by the rain which had been

*Mr. Samuel Mohono (center) was recently ordained in Lesotho*

threatening for some time. Then, in between heavy showers, lightning, and thunder, the multitudes were fed.

We felt it was a pity that the rain had "spoiled" the festivities, but the Basotho looked at it differently. The Lord was giving his blessing to what had taken place! For hadn't they been praying for rain?

TINA BOHN, AIMM

# MENNO PROJECT: Fly South

Since 1974 more than 140 persons have participated in the MENNO PROJECT in Colombia. Two brothers, Gerald Stucky located in Bogota, Colombia, and Edward Stucky living in Berne, Indiana, developed and maintain this program. The purpose of the project is to actively involve persons from North America in the work of the Mennonite church in Colombia for a period of two weeks. It is much more than a tourist's trip, though individuals do get to take in some of the local sights. The experience is educational and allows some grass-roots involvement with nationals and missionaries. The project is designed for five couples, (single persons may apply) chosen on a first-come first-serve basis. Trips are scheduled for February and either October or November. Arrangements are made through Edward Stucky while in North America. Gerald and Mary Hope Stucky meet them and take charge once they arrive in Colombia.

The February 1984 group included five couples from Indiana and Minnesota. They did a wide variety of projects at the retreat center in Cachipay and the home for the aged in Bogota. They fixed bathroom plumbing, put up an awning, built a plastic-covered walkway, reconstructed wash basins, made over 30 sets of sheets and pillow slips, reupholstered eight pieces of furniture, rewired a dining hall and shop, repaired fluorescent lights, installed vinyl flooring, repaired doors and car seats, painted furniture, restrung two metal chairs, made curtains, put in ceramic tile, repaired a roof, recovered two old mattresses, taught English classes, gave three haircuts and a permanent. They also gave a concert in the Salt Cathedral! All this was in addition to eating, sleeping, sightseeing, shopping, attending evening fellowship sessions, visiting some coffee farms, some Colombian Christians, and four church services.

**If you should have interest in participating in a Menno Project, please contact Edward Stucky**, 755 South Harrison St., Berne, IN 46711 for more information.

*Devrin Froese (second row, third from left) with classmates and teachers*

# TAIWAN: Reflections by an Eleven-Year-Old

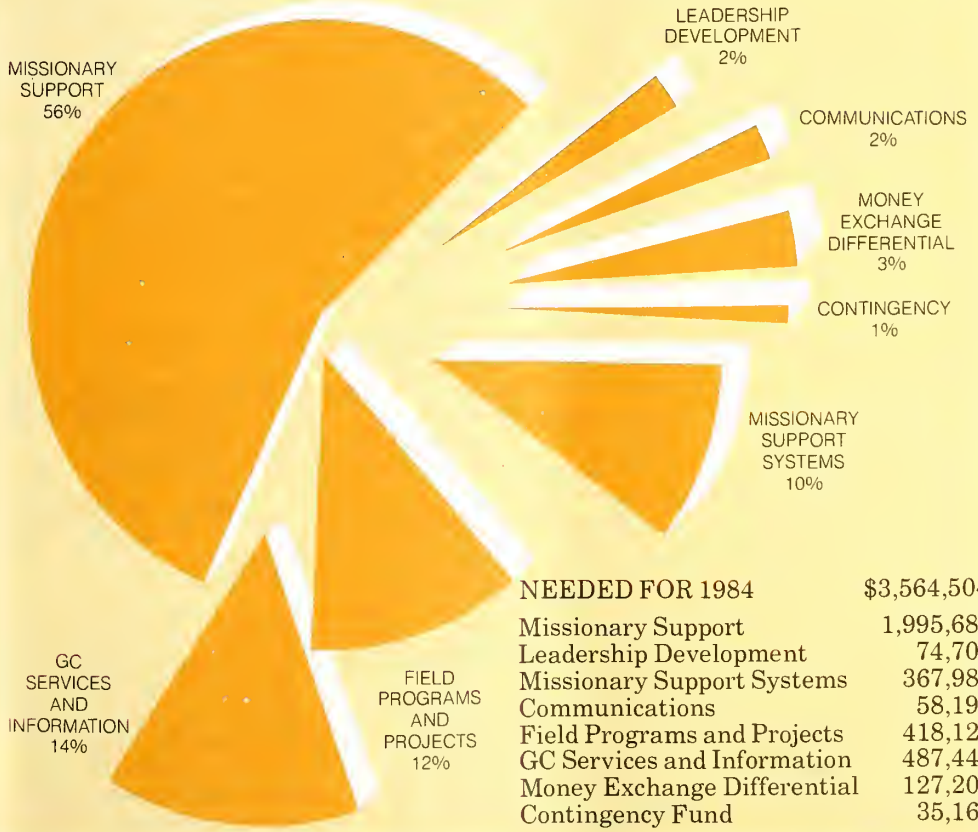
Since I have come to Taiwan I have had many new experiences.

One pretty big step for me was Chinese food. It took me a little while before I liked rice more than potatoes. I didn't like *jaudze* (Chinese dumpling) that much at first, but I have learned to like them.

Taiwan has a variety of fruits that I like. In every season there is a different kind of fruit. I like pink pomelo the best. At home we got Japanese oranges at Christmastime but I don't think they're as good as tangerines.

One thing I would never have experienced if we had

## Your 1984 Mission Dollar at Work




| NEEDED FOR 1984 | $3,564,504 |
|---|---|
| Missionary Support | 1,995,685 |
| Leadership Development | 74,703 |
| Missionary Support Systems | 367,982 |
| Communications | 58,195 |
| Field Programs and Projects | 418,128 |
| GC Services and Information | 487,446 |
| Money Exchange Differential | 127,200 |
| Contingency Fund | 35,165 |

not come to Taiwan is the kindness of Chinese people. They go out of their way to help you. For example, when we were in Hsin Chu we wanted to find a wood carving place. We stopped at a gas station to see where it was. A man there didn't really know where it was either but he got on his bicycle and tried to help us out. When we found it, Dad offered him 50 N.T. but he wouldn't take it.

I have learned many new things but one of the hardest things to get accustomed to is the language. Chinese is a difficult language because it has four tones. You might want to say, "I want some soup," but instead you might say, "I want to lie down."

In Canada I had never seen a firecracker because they're illegal, but when we came here I saw and heard many of them. I have had many experiences with firecrackers. A friend told me that those little lady fingers didn't hurt when they blew up in your hand, so I tried it. My hand sure did hurt for the rest of the evening.

Hwalien is located on the coast and so I have had some experiences with seaside culture. Last year at Easter time we went to Oluanpi. I went snorkeling a few times with my dad. I saw different colors of fish, coral and even an underwater gun. Here in Hwalien we also did some swimming in the ocean. I liked it until I almost drowned.

I have been down at the harbor a few times and have seen a few different kinds of fish. I have seen a baby whale, a shark, a stingray, and some other fish of which I don't know the names. I think it's quite interesting watching the fishing boats come in with their catch. I would be afraid to go out in the ocean in these fishing boats. I would also get very seasick.

We arrived in Taipei the day Typhoon Andy struck Taiwan. I didn't like it that much because we woke up in the middle of the night from jet lag. The night seemed long and boring because we didn't have electricity and therefore couldn't turn on any lights. The next morning I looked outside and saw the palm trees swaying. Many branches were broken. I could hear roof shingles clanking on the ground. That was the first and biggest typhoon I have ever experienced.

Taiwan's mountains are very scenic. I have traveled on them a few times to Taipei on the coastal road and from Taichung to Hwalien on the Cross Island Road. I don't really ever want to take a bus on those routes though because it doesn't seem as safe.

I have experienced a few new modes of transportation that we have in Canada but rarely used. The first time I had ever in my life ridden in a plane was our trip out here. At home we used a car and a trailer to go wherever we wanted to go. One time when we were coming in for a landing I thought we were going to crash because a lady spoke through a microphone and the fasten your seatbelt lights came on. We were dropping below the clouds and all I could see was mountains and ocean. We didn't crash and I realized later that they always do that.

The train is the most useful way of transportation in Taiwan. It is cheap and comfortable to ride in. I like riding on the train better than bus, however, because on bus you can't walk around whereas on the train you can.

I have only ridden on a ferry once, just before it broke down. It was fun although I did get sort of seasick.

Getting to know other missionaries from different countries has been a good experience. Camp Shalom provided an opportunity in getting to know kids from other countries. I liked the activities they had planned for us, especially "Water Balloon Capture the Flag." Camp Shalom was great! O.P.E.C. was almost like Camp Shalom except that O.P.E.C. was more educational. The thing I liked best there was initiative tasks and recreation.

I have also had some difficult experiences since last year.

Aspirating a pin was a real difficult experience for me. I was so scared that I might die right there and I thought life was so short. I was really grateful when I coughed up the pin.

Loneliness has also been a hardship for me. In Canada I would do things with my friends after school like ride around on bike or play football, baseball, soccer, hockey, and other sports. In Hwalien my friend does not live close to our home.

All in all, my experience in Taiwan was worthwhile and memorable. What I have learned here could never be duplicated in any other classroom. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to be part of the missionary community in Taiwan.

DEVRIN FROESE

*Devrin is a student at Hwalien Mennonite Christian School where his father teaches. His family has been in Taiwan for two years of service.*

## BOTSWANA: In Prison They Visited Me

"We have continued to find ministry here in the various openings that we sometimes literally stumble upon. The high court judge for the northern district is in our expatriate group of people meeting for Bible study on Monday nights. He lamented that there were so many prisoners awaiting trial who have no contact with anyone outside their confined areas. So with his help I now have permission to have regular Bible studies with about 15 to 20 prisoners. We are studying the life of Jesus as recorded in Luke. Lois had been there longer than I, working with the women prisoners."

BUDDY DICK, AIMM

## Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission: AIMM

AIMM is the agency through which COM does its mission outreach in Africa. It is a cooperative venture of the General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church, Evangelical Mennonite Church, Evangelical Mennonite Conference and the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren.

## Prayer List Available

We encourage you to pray for the individuals that you have read about in *Comments*. COM has a monthly prayer sheet that is available to interested persons upon request.

**Letters for Peace** is a grass-roots program that offers Americans a way to take personal, immediate and purposeful action against the growing dangers of nuclear holocaust. The program provides a way for individual Americans to send letters of concern and friendship to individual Soviet citizens. Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section is encouraging Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to participate in the Letters for Peace program as a practical way to reach out to people who have been named the enemy. For more information write to Letters for Peace, 59 Bluff Ave., Rowayton, CT 06853, (203) 853-8038.

**A seminar on Friendship Evangelism,** sharing the gospel of Christ naturally with unchurched neighbors and friends, drew 40-50 ministers and laypeople to Langley (B.C.) Mennonite Fellowship May 4-5. Sponsored by the committee on the ministry and the missions and service committee of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, the seminar was led by Arthur McPhee, pastor and evangelist. McPhee emphasized that evangelism begins with the heart, not with a plan, and said one should get the Great Commandment (to love one another) and the Great Commission (to make disciples) in proper order.

**A medical center in Denmark** is the first of its kind in the world to treat only victims of political torture. Established last year by Amnesty International, the International Rehabilitation and Research Center for Torture Victims receives patients from South America, the Middle East and many other places where political torture is common.

# Peace and justice office resumes registration info mailings

Newton, Kan.—For the first time since the end of the U.S. draft for the Korean and Vietnam wars, the General Conference has resumed mailing draft registration information packets directly to young men.

In March the conference's peace and justice office sent information packets to all 16-, 17- and 18-year-old young men listed in the Commission on Education's young adult census. This large mailing initiated the informational program.

Next month and every quarter from now on, packets will be mailed to young men as they approach their 16th birthdays. Postcard reminders will be sent to the same individuals as they approach ages 17 and 18.

The peace and justice draft registration information packets are designed to help young men think through their responses to the U.S. Military Selective Service Act requirement that they register within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

The General Conference position statement and current guidance is conveyed through a copy of "A Christian Declaration on the Way of Peace" (with a 1983 peace and justice "supplement"). Then follow "Who Is A Conscientious Objector?" and "Advice to COs Facing Draft Registration," both of which are prepared by the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors in Washington, of which the General Conference is a sponsoring organization through Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section.

Further assistance for young men to develop their own sincerely held convictions is provided by a list of books for recommended reading. These eight sources range from John Drescher's *Why I Am A Conscientious Objector* to Melissa Miller and Phil Shenk's *The Path of Most Resistance* (both are personal accounts of varying responses to draft registration). Help with understanding the biblical basis of peacemaking is offered by Vernard Eller's *War and Peace from Genesis to Revelation* and John Howard Yoder's *What Would You Do?*

Finally and most importantly, young men are encouraged to take the time to write out personal responses to the questions provided by two MCC U.S. Peace Section worksheets, "Draft Registration: Options and Responses" and the "Christian Peacemaker Registration." By completing these worksheets and filing copies of the Christian Peacemaker Registration with their local congregations, young men will have a record of the development of their CO convictions and will be prepared to seek a CO classification if and when draft inductions begin again.

Beyond the General Conference guidance, the recommended readings and the personal worksheets, young men are encouraged to counsel with their parents and pastors. For this purpose, a draft registration information packet for congregational counselors is being mailed to each U.S. congregation to be kept available for reference. Five packets have been mailed to the Congregational Resources Board circulating library in Winnipeg. Young men who are subject to the U.S. Military Selective Service Act registration requirements even though living in Canada or elsewhere overseas may request a packet directly from the Commission on Home Ministries U.S., Peace and Justice, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

Two actions will be necessary for the program to continue effectively: pastors and congregational leaders must ensure their young men are listed on the COE young adult census, and CHM U.S. will need funds to produce and mail large quantities of the packets. Families and congregations receiving the packets are being encouraged to help continue the program for others by designating contributions for CHM U.S. Peace and Justice. *Robert Hull*

## *Women in Ministry conference studies 'images of God'*

Harrisonburg, Va.—Over 200 women and men met together at Harrisonburg Mennonite Church May 3-6 for the seventh Women in Ministry Conference. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, professor of English at William Patterson College in New Jersey, was the keynote speaker.

Participants came from the Mennonite Church, General Conference, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ and Church of the Brethren, as well as from several other denominations. They traveled from Pennsylvania, Indiana, New York, California and several provinces in Canada to attend the conference which focused on the theme "In the Image of God."

Four workshop periods were scheduled during the four-day conference, dealing with subjects such as journaling, mutuality in marriage, dreams, theological and biblical issues of women in ministry, and inclusive language.

Women representing different Mennonite communities led five worship services, which included Scripture readings, times of silence, singing, drama and a candlelight service. Several women shared their faith stories during these times. In the final Sunday morning session participants shared a meal of bread, tea and fruit.

Mollenkott's three addresses focused on the theme "In the Image of God" and the need to understand God in both male and female terms.

**Juvenal Pacheco** was ordained to the ministry on April 5 at the Mennonite church in Ibagué. He has served the Ibagué church for approximately two years. Previously he had served other Mennonite churches in the country. He is president of the MENCOLDES board and recording secretary of the Mennonite Church of Colombia.

*Juvenal Pacheco (left) is ordained. At right is Commission on Overseas Mission missionary Gerald Stucky.*

**A just-published encyclopedia** represents the first time that the five major Brethren bodies have come together for a cooperative project. The aim of the project was to provide comprehensive coverage of all aspects of Brethren life. The scope included all religious groups deriving their origins from the movement later known as Brethren, which began in Germany in 1708. The three-volume encyclopedia project brought together representatives of the Brethren Church (sometimes called the Ashland Brethren), Church of the Brethren, Dunkard Brethren, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches and Old German Baptist Brethren.

# Annual youth council meetings sharpen skills, focus issues

Elkhart, Ind.—Youth workers from the General Conference Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church gathered May 9-12 in Elkhart, Ind., for the annual churchwide youth council sessions. This was the second year GC and MC personnel met jointly to share ideas and resources.

Meeting at Greencroft Center, the 23 youth workers were joined by Paula Diller Lehman, GC secretary for youth education, Lavon Welty, MC associate secretary for congregational youth ministries, and several other GC and MC agency representatives. Lehman and Don Yoder, Ohio Conference (MC) youth minister, chaired the sessions.

Conference representatives reported on highlights of the past year and goals for the coming year, and detailed a project that went well during 1983. Some time was also spent in separate sessions to concentrate on agenda relating to the specific Mennonite branches.

Among agency personnel reporting to youth council were Susan Janzen, *With* magazine editor; Orville Yoder of Mennonite Board of Education; James Dunn of the Commission on Education; John Zook, counselor at Bethany Christian High School, Goshen, Ind. (representing Mennonite Secondary Education Council); John Rogers of Mennonite Publishing House and Tom Bishop of Mennonite Board of Missions.

Each morning session included worship with Dave Miller, assistant pastor at East Goshen Mennonite Church and youth program coordinator for the 1985 MC assembly, and Bible study with Willard Swartley, associate professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart.

The worship and Bible study focused on three questions: Who is Jesus? Who are we? and How are we? Miller and Swartley presented the themes using methods that could be effective with youth, as well as being inspirational for the youth workers assembled in Elkhart.

In addition to hearing reports, sharing ideas and worshiping, the youth workers took part in three in-service training sessions. Marcus Smucker, co-director of field education and spiritual formation at AMBS, led "Training Sponsors for Counseling" two evenings.

Smucker stressed four principles to be kept in mind when counseling youth: (1) be personal, (2) be developmentally aware, (3) be spiritually discerning and (4) be true to yourself. He emphasized that listening is the most important part of counseling.

The third in-service session featured Rosie Stoltzfus, who is researching female adolescent development. Stoltzfus, a student at AMBS, built her presentation around two basic questions: "What effect does adolescence have on the female?" and "What are factors influencing the development of self-identity in the adolescent female?"

Stoltzfus has developed a set of six challenges for people who are involved in nurturing adolescent females:

—Create settings whereby adolescent females will be nurtured as whole persons,

—Create church structures that encourage participation of all in all aspects of congregational life,

—Affirm unique gifts of women,

—Refuse to subscribe to hierarchical modes of relating,

—Place equal value on nurturing, dependency, intimacy and relationships as is placed on autonomy, independence, aggressiveness and leadership.

—Seriously study the Bible to determine the implications of "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons (and daughters) of God, through faith. . . . There is neither male nor female; for you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 5:26, 28).

Friday afternoon the group motored to Camp Friedenswald in southern Michigan for a time of recreation and two workshops—"The Youth Group" and "Outdoor Ministries."

Youth council came to a close Saturday morning with an evaluation of the sessions. *Susan E. Janzen*

## Bluffton church declares sanctuary for refugees

Bluffton, Ohio—First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio, voted on May 6 to declare itself a public sanctuary for refugees from Central America.

The resolution was brought to the congregation by its board of peace, mission and service. The church's action follows a year of study and discussion on the plight of Central American refugees and U.S. involvement in that region.

The General Conference's Central District Conference, to which the Bluffton church belongs, passed a resolution in April 1983 encouraging its congregations to consider aiding Central American refugees.

The decision by First Mennonite, Bluffton, brings to four the total number of General Conference congregations which have formally declared themselves as sanctuaries for Central American refugees. The others are Community Mennonite Church, Markham, Ill., Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church and Faith Mennonite Church, Minneapolis.

Three other General Conference congregations—Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church, Dallas Mennonite Fellowship and Jubilee Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.—are supporting other declared sanctuaries in their areas.

**Exploration of need for support services** for people in Mennonite congregations experiencing a crisis in pregnancy is being conducted by Ken and Phyllis Schmidt of Middlebury, Ind. They are developing a roster of good Christian counseling services for these situations, finding Mennonite families who would be willing to share their homes as a retreat, and a listing of Mennonite couples who wish to adopt children. After about a year of exploration, recommendations for ongoing program sponsorship by an inter-Mennonite agency will be made. Anyone interested may contact the Schmidts at 15468 CR 18, Middlebury, IN 46540, (219) 825-9627.

**Around the world, drug abuse** is becoming more common and alarming than ever, reports Missionary News Service. Rough estimates from Malaysia, for example, show that one out of every 36 people there is addicted to drugs. In Colombia, which supplies 90 percent of the cocaine used in the United States, drug addiction is occurring more frequently among the middle class. Heroin use in Europe is growing faster than it did in the United States in the 1960s. Curtailing drug traffic is difficult. In Colombia cocaine and marijuana sales account for 10 percent of the gross national product.

**The depressed state of organized Christendom** in Western Europe was revealed in a recent magazine poll, according to Missionary News Service. Among Roman Catholics, 37 percent regularly go to church; among Protestants, only 9 percent. While the churches are declining in attendance, more people are going into cults and non-Christian religions. Twenty percent of those polled said they believe in reincarnation. Seventeen percent call themselves non-religious or atheist.

# Suspended MCC Canada worker assigned to northern Labrador

Winnipeg (MCCC)—A Mennonite Central Committee Canada worker suspended by the Newfoundland and Labrador department of Social Services has been reassigned by MCC Canada and will continue working in the remote northern Labrador community of Davis Inlet.

Dorothy Mills, a 71-year-old social worker from California, was suspended Feb. 27 when she refused to implement a provincial government welfare policy which she felt threatened traditional native family life. The policy states that welfare recipients who have income-earning non-relatives living with them must have their welfare payments reduced. They are expected to make up the loss of funds by charging room and board.

Mills and three other social workers, who were also suspended, argue that room and board is foreign to native culture in the area. Communal sharing of homes is normal among natives in Davis Inlet. There is, in fact, no word in the Innu language for a landlord/tenant relationship.

On March 22 the MCC Canada executive committee asked Mills to continue in Davis Inlet at MCC Canada expense. Newfoundland and Labrador Social Services had been paying her expenses under terms of a contract with MCC Canada.

In early April, Menno Wiebe, director of MCC Canada Native Concerns, and Campbell Nisbet, MCC Canada voluntary service coordinator for Newfoundland and Labrador, met with Newfoundland Deputy Minister of Social Services Gilbert Pike. At an April 6 meeting Wiebe and Nisbet reminded Pike that MCC Canada has been serving in Newfoundland for over 30 years, primarily in education and medical services. MCC Canada supplied workers when local workers were unavailable and later, when locals filled the positions, began service in remote communities. Mills was sent to Davis Inlet a year ago after the department of Social Services failed to find a social worker who would live in the isolated community.

Wiebe and Nisbet shared with Pike MCC Canada concerns about the way Mills was dismissed and told him that MCC Canada was anxious to resolve the breakdown in the contract as soon as possible. Pike was also told that MCC Canada remains committed to accountability to the needs of the Davis Inlet community and that MCC Canada hopes that the policy which led to the dismissal of Mills would be reviewed and changed. Pike indicated that Mills cannot be rehired under those conditions.

Wiebe and Nisbet also assured Pike that MCC Canada will not be involved in a court case brought against the Newfoundland government by one of the dismissed workers. "We don't intend to do legal battle," Wiebe told him. "For us there is just one issue—the need for the culturally viable social service which will alleviate the considerable social stress at Davis Inlet."

Following their meeting with Deputy Minister Pike, Wiebe and Nisbet visited Davis Inlet. During meetings with the band council they learned that the community strongly supported Mills and appreciated her service. Council members asked MCC Canada to let her remain in the community as a communications officer—someone who will read and interpret government communications and help community members to write responses. The community also offered to pay for her housing and utilities. Other expenses will be borne by MCC Canada.

The band council also drafted a letter to Department of Social Services Minister Thomas Hickey, inviting him to visit Davis Inlet to learn firsthand about the unique communal living situation in the community. The council also sent a 115-signature community petition calling for a review of the boarders policy to the Department.

Because of her valuable service, Wiebe states that Mills' dismissal is "especially regressive."

Deputy Minister Pike has assured MCC Canada that the Newfoundland government is anxious to continue a wholesome relationship with MCC Canada. MCC Canada has eight workers in Newfoundland/Labrador serving in medical and community services.


## Interim pastor needed

**First Mennonite**, Mountain Lake, Minn.

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**Since last December** 83 people have been baptized and joined the Mennonite church, according to a recent bulletin from the missions committee of the Paraguay Mennonite Churches. Of these 83 new members, 40 are from the Indian churches and 43 from the Spanish-speaking churches. Another new church started in the city of Presidente Stroessner, a port on the Parana River in eastern Paraguay.

**Prevention** is probably a more effective way to fight adolescent drug use than other traditional methods of enforcement and treatment, reports a Rand Corporation study. The new method, which was used to discourage seventh graders in several schools from smoking, stressed simple short-term ill effects such as discolored teeth and bad breath. Long-term consequences were downplayed, the researchers said, because teenagers are more concerned about the present and are less likely to believe a warning about the future problems.

**"The payment of taxes** in the service of our common life is a necessary and a good thing. It is therefore unusual and inappropriate to refuse tax payment," begins a declaration printed in several national daily newspapers in the Netherlands on April 3 and signed by 69 Amsterdam area ministers, including at least seven Mennonites. The statement, pointing out the Dutch government's agreement to place nuclear weapons in the Netherlands, goes on to say, "In this critical phase we consider tax objection as a necessary means of protest. We wish tax monies no longer to be misused to continue along this dead-end road."

# RECORD

## calendar

July 24-29—Mennonite World Conference, Strasbourg, France

**Canada**

July 5-10—Conference of Mennonites in Canada, Three Hills, Alta.

Aug. 22-25—Great Trek 2, Thunder Bay, Ont.

**Northern**

June 14-16—Northern District Conference, Freeman, S.D.

**Pacific**

June 21-24—Pacific District Conference, First Mennonite Church, Paso Robles, Calif.

**Western**

Oct. 19-21—Western District Conference, McPherson, Kan.

## workers

*John* and *Tina (Warkentin) Bohn*, Grace Church, Pandora, Ohio, will return from Lesotho in late July for a short North America Assignment. Their present Commission on Overseas Mission/Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission assignment is to work with the African Federal Church Council to develop and implement a program of rural development within the context of a Bible-teaching ministry. The Bohns plan to return to Lesotho in November.

*Titus* and *Karen (Loewen) Guenther*, Toronto United Mennonite Church, will complete a three-year COM/AIMM assignment in Lesotho this summer. Titus has been serving as chaplain and parish pastor at the National University of Lesotho for the Lesotho Evangelical Church. He has also been lecturing in theology at the university and the LEC's Theological Training School. Karen has been studying, writing and homemaking.

*Arnold* and *Grace (Hiebner) Harder*, First Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., will be on a short COM/AIMM NAA this summer before returning to Zaire, where Arnold serves as director of the SEDA agricultural development program in Nyanga, and Grace assists at the Girls' School in addition to homemaking and radio operation.

*Richard* and *Jean (Simpson) Hirschler*, Beatrice (Neb.) Church, will terminate COM/AIMM service in Zaire during 1984.

*Jonathan* and *Mary Kay (Burkhalter) Larson*, Faith Church, Minneapolis, and First Church, Berne, Ind., are completing their first term of COM/AIMM service in Botswana. Jonathan has been involved in Bible-teaching ministries. Mary Kay has been employed by the Department of Health.

*Anna V. Liechty*, First Church, Berne, Ind., is retiring to Berne in June after serving with COM/AIMM in Zaire for 38 years. A year ago Anna had prepared to retire from her responsibilities as teacher at the Bible Institute and as a writer of Christian literature, but returned to Zaire for an additional year to assist during a time of transition.

*Carl* and *Sandra (Cook) Liechty*, First Church, Berne, Ind., will be on NAA from July 19-Sept. 1. They are assigned to church planting in the Tokyo area and have been serving with COM in Japan since 1964.

*David "Gary"* and *Eleanor "Ellie" (Peters) Loewen*, Sterling Church, Winnipeg, leave Brazil in June for a 13-month NAA. Gary and Ellie will study at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. They have served under COM in Brazil since 1979.

*Marcus* and *Cynthia (Habegger) Loganbill*, First Church of Christian, Moundridge, Kan., have completed a two-year overseas mission volunteers assignment in Bogota, Colombia, under COM. Marcus has been teaching junior high science and serving as coordinator for grades 6-12. Cynthia has been secretary for the executive secretary of the Colombian Mennonite Church and a volunteer at the home for the aged. They will return to Colombia in the fall as COM mission partners.

*Dan* and *Elma (Tiessen) Peters*, Blumenorter Church, Rosetown, Man., will be on NAA for COM in June-October. They have been giving leadership at the Burwalde Mennonite Church in the Swift Current Colony in Mexico.

*Sheldon* and *Marietta (Landis) Sawatzky*, Pine Grove Church, Bowmansville, Pa., will begin a one-year NAA in August. They have been serving with COM in Taiwan since 1965.

*Fritz* and *Ellen (Hostetler) Sprunger*, Salem Church, Kidron, Ohio, and Oak Grove Church, Smithville, Ohio, leave Japan in June for a one-year NAA. They will begin a new COM assignment in the summer of 1985.

*J. N. "Han"* and *Martha (Boschman) Vandenberg*, Mei Tsun Mennonite Church, Taichung, Taiwan, will return in August from Taiwan for a one-year NAA under COM. Their assignment is in evangelism and church planting relating most specifically to the Li Ming Church in Taichung.

*Peter* and *Lois (Geiger) Voran*, First Church, Pretty Prairie, Kan., will be on NAA from Japan under COM from July 15 to October.

*Gail Wiebe*, Emmaus Church, Whitewater, Kan., is completing her first term of COM/AIMM service in Upper Volta. She plans to study translation during her one-year NAA.

XI
Strasbourg
1984

**XI Assembly**
**Mennonite World Conference**
**Palais des Congrès/Wacken/Lycée Kléber**
**Strasbourg, France**
**July 24-29, 1984**

**Theme : God's People Serve in Hope**
**(Texts from I. Peter)**

| | 24 Tuesday | 25 Wednesday | 26 Thursday | 27 Friday | 28 Saturday | 29 Sunday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 08:15 | VOLUNTARY PRAYER GROUPS | | | VOLUNTARY PRAYER GROUPS | | |
| 09:00<br>10:30 | **Registration in Palais des Congrès 08:00 - 22:00 Tuesday** | – Singing, Scripture Reading and Prayer<br>– Zaire Choir<br>– Stories of Our Lives Anita Lichti (West Germany)<br>– Worship : Kikweta Mawa Wabala (Zaire)<br>– " Who Are God's People ? " Hugo Zorrilla (Colombia) John E. Toews (USA) | – Singing, Scripture Reading and Prayer<br>– Bechterdissen Choir (West Germany)<br>– Stories of Our Lives<br>– Poem, Lili Thiessen (West Germany)<br>– Intercessory Prayer<br>– "God's People Witnessing" Takio Tanase (Japan) Gilberto Flores (Guatemala) | – Singing, Scripture Reading and Prayer<br>– Chancel Choir, Bluffton (USA)<br>– Liturgical Reading and Prayer<br>– Stories of Our Lives<br>– "God's People Serving" Elke Hübert (W. Germany) Willi Wiedemann (W. Germany) Georgine Boiten - du Rieu (Netherlands) | – Singing, Scripture Reading and Prayer<br>– Diamond St. Choir Philadelphia (USA)<br>– Solo, Sherrie Strange, NYC (USA)<br>– Stories of Our Lives<br>– Program by Children<br>– Story, "Welcoming the Enemy" June Yoder (USA)<br>– "God's People Reconciling" Ron Sider (USA)<br>– Response Sjouke Voolstra (Netherlands) | – 09 : 45 Brass Choir<br>– Opening<br>– Music, Rachel Esso<br>– Stories of Our Lives<br>– "What Mean These Stones ?" Emma Richards (USA)<br>– Zaire Choir<br>– "Rejoice in Hope" Samuel Gerber (Switz.)<br>– Goshen College Choir (USA)<br>– Communion Service<br>– Psalm 100, Combined Choirs<br>– Installation of New Officers<br>– Offering<br>– Closing Remarks, Charles Christano<br>– Adjournment (12 : 15) |
| 10:30<br>11:00 | | PAUSE | PAUSE | PAUSE | PAUSE | |
| 11:00<br>12:30 | | DISCUSSION | GROUPS<br>1 large group, | DISCUSSION<br>65 small groups | GROUPS | |
| 12:30<br>14:30 | | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH | LUNCH |
| 14:00<br>16:00 | Strasbourg Film | Strasbourg Film<br>Working Groups | Working Groups | Working Groups | Working Groups | Strasbourg Film |
| 14:30<br>16:00 | Orientation :<br>– Discussion Group Leaders<br>– Interpreters | Cantata : "Every Deliverance" Alberta Mennonite Choir (Canada)<br>Strasbourg Film | Musical : "Ruth" Choir, Amsterdam (Netherlands)<br>Music Program | Musical : "Ruth" Choir, Amsterdam (Netherlands)<br>Music Program | – 14 : 00 Concert : Chamber Orchestra (Southwest Germany) Soloists : William Reimer, Edith Wiens-Moser<br>Strasbourg Film | Choir Festival :<br>– Diamond Street<br>– Taiwan Choir<br>– Goshen College<br>– Convergence<br>– French Youth |
| 16:15<br>18:00 | Strasbourg Film<br>Orientation :<br>– Interpreters | Sectional Meeting " History, Heritage and Identity"<br>Interest Groups | Sectional Meeting Program by Native Americans (Indians) (US, Canada, Paraguay, Guatemala)<br>Interest Groups | Sectional Meeting : "Relief and Development"<br>Interest Groups | Sectional Meeting : "World Hunger and the Arms Race"<br>Interest Groups | Note : The Assembly officially closes at noon. The afternoon session is specially planned for those attending on Sunday only, however all are welcome. |
| 18:00<br>20:00 | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | DINNER | |
| 20:00 | – Congregational Singing and Prayer<br>– French Choir/Brass Choir<br>– "Who Are We ?" Robert Kreider (USA)<br>– Roll Call<br>– "Confessing Our Hope" Charles Christano (Indonesia) President Mennonite World Conference<br>– Adjournment (22 : 00) | – Congregational Singing and Prayer<br>– Taiwan Choir<br>– Report from Asia Timothy Liau (Taiwan) Takeji Nomura (Japan) Margaret Devadason (India) Paul Myers (USA)<br>– Offering<br>– Adjournment (21 : 30) | – Congregational Singing and Prayer<br>– Oratorio : "The Abiding Place"<br>– Winnipeg Oratorio Choir<br>– Zaire Choir<br>– Lage (Germany) MB Choir<br>– Winnipeg Childrens Choir<br>– Adjournment (21 : 30) | – Congregational Singing and Prayer<br>– Zaire Choir<br>– Report from Africa, Stephen Ndlovu (Zimbabwe)<br>– Youth Program European Youth, Ruth Raeb, Leader<br>– Offering<br>– Adjournment (21 : 30) | – Congregational Singing and Prayer<br>– "Focus on Central America", Elier Rodriguez (Puerto Rico), Arnulfo Vado (Nicaragua), Cesar Del Aguila Canet (Guatemala), Erlinde de Rovelo (Honduras), Hermen Bontreger (USA), Elizie Murcie (Colombia)<br>– Swiss Choir<br>– Communion Preparation Myron Augsburger (USA) Cherly Ummel (Switzerland)<br>– Adjournment (21 : 45) | |
| 22:00<br>24:00 | YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN LYCÉE KLÉBER | | | YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN LYCÉE KLÉBER | | |

**Chair :**
Charles Christano (Indonesia)
Carl Brüsewitz (Netherlands)

**Evening Chair :**
Dore Geiser (W. Germany)
Merte Quiroga de Alverez (Argentina)
Jacob F. Peuls (Canada)
Cherly Ummel (Switzerland)

**Song Leaders :**
Margrit Remseier (Switzerland)
Adolf Schnebele (West Germany)
Abram Enns (W. Germany)

**Music Coordinators :**
Mergrit Remseier (Switzerland)
Dora Geiser (West Germany)
Frank Klassen (Canada)

**Worship Coordinator :**
Anita Lichti (West Germany)

**Piano :**
Rachel Esso (France)
Dick Klomp (Netherlands)
Inge Lichtenberger (West Germany)
Théo Nussbaumer (France)

**Daily Activities**
Peace Center
Prayer Rooms
Children's Program
Meeting Place for Women

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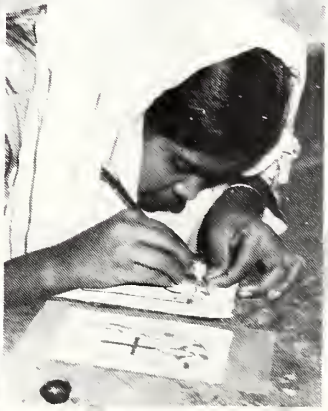
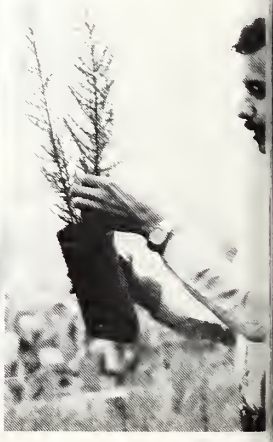
*agriculture/gardening*

*water resource development*

*employment creation*



*forestation*



*Mennonite Central Committee, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501*
*MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8*

## It is a piece of home

I feel I may call you friend and do not do so lightly. Through your articles these past few years I feel I have come to know you well. Through the printed page you have lifted me up, put me in my place and given me food for thought. I wish I could voice my true appreciation in some way. Now, more than ever, I look forward to each new copy of *The Mennonite*. I grew up Mennonite, surrounded by the love and fellowship of family and community. At present, in graduate school, I find myself 1,200 miles from my family and nine hours by car from a Mennonite church. Perhaps you can understand what it means to me to receive this "piece of home." *Elizabeth J. Schertz, 2405 15th, Apt. 4, Lubbock, TX 79401*

April 30

## Is technology neutral?

It took me to the last page of the March 27 issue to find the assumption that underlay almost every article in the media issue. But there it was, "Technology is intrinsically neutral." This sort of thinking is rampant among those of the Mennonite world who wish to get involved with the electronic media, particularly television. Why do we assume that technology is intrinsically neutral?

Look at nuclear power. By its nature nuclear power requires the production of radioactive compounds. Is that technology neutral then to the young woman who dies of cancer after exposure to radon gas from a uranium mine tailings pile? Is that technology neutral to the heart attack victim who safely recovers in a hospital powered by nuclear power when the rest of the country is suffering blackouts due to shortages of oil? For the one it is negative. For the other it is positive. In both cases this is because of its intrinsic nature as a technology. It is not neutral.

What doctrine of human nature is there that supports a belief in the intrinsic neutrality of technology? Human beings are flawed. What they produce tends to be as flawed as the people producing it.

Where are our studies of the evils of the electronic media to place beside our feasibility studies? Where are the examinations of the real possibility that television is intrinsically hostile to an Anabaptist Christian message?

In their caution about the world our isolationist forebears had something to teach us, something we seem to have completely forgotten. They knew that the world was intrinsically hostile to the message of Christ which they bore. They did not even consider the possibility of intrinsic neutrality. We can no longer pretend to live separate from the world, but does that mean we should throw aside all caution? *Bruce Hiebert, #504 Louis Riel House, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6*

April 30

## Letter of conscience

I object on conscientious grounds to my taxes being used for war purposes, for example, to subsidize the construction of parts for and to test the cruise missile.

It is immoral according to my religious beliefs, which forbid me to kill and tell me to treat others as I would wish to be treated.

It is illegal according to the United Nations Charter and Covenants, ratified by Canada, which outlaw first-strike weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

It is suicidal since it would invite retaliation in kind and could result in the extermination of myself, my next of kin and all other life on earth.

I have sent 12.2 percent (of income tax owed to Revenue Canada) of the net federal tax payable to Conscience Canada Inc., 255-835 Humboldt St., Victoria, BC V8V 2M4. *Annie Janzen, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4*

May 2

*Editor's note: Annie Janzen, head cook at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, submitted this copy of a letter she included with her income tax report to Revenue Canada this year.*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# Sanctuary: law breaker or love giver

*Margaretha Ediger*

They never did tell us their last name. But this family hardly looked or acted like outlaws. They walked into our home on March 7 to partake of a hastily thrown together meal of hot dogs and beans.

After grace, spoken by me in broken Spanish, we felt encircled by a bond of love. We were kin through Jesus.

After that the main theme was enjoyment. The four older children—Marta, Julian, Juanita and Alicia—eager but polite and well-mannered, took to the hot dogs and shook their heads gratefully at relish and ketchup. Father Felipe was short and stocky, a smile crinkling his brown skin. He held 7-month-old Inez, a sturdy baby with black hair like lush velvet. In between bites, Felipe played with Inez and made her laugh. He also lovingly put another hot dog and yet another on his wife, Elena's, plate. She was less than five feet tall, with quite beautiful Indian features and breasts heavy with milk.

We asked if Spanish was their native tongue. Felipe said, "No, we have a fine Guatemalan Indian language to communicate with as a family." We saw that theirs was a goodly heritage.

Menno asked Felipe if he was a professor. He laughed and held up four fingers. No, no professor, only four years of schooling, but yes, he had taught. He had become a lay Catholic cathechist with a great burden for the illiterate. He recalled that when Jesus taught the multitudes he fed them with bread and then he fed their minds and spirits with knowledge, wisdom and compassion.

Felipe understood the body, mind and spirit hunger of his people. He taught 17 young men what he knew and he commissioned them to go into the hamlets and teach the poor and powerless. All 17 young men were murdered.

Felipe's brother also was tortured and murdered, his body dumped on the family doorstep as a warning.

Felipe had been pursued for months by government soldiers but was hidden by missionaries. Anyone who teaches the poor is seen as subversive or communist. The rich fear for their huge, ill-gotten holdings if the poor gain knowledge and begin to seek justice.

Felipe managed to escape with his family. In Mexico he and Elena found work in the fields, working from sunrise to sunset for pennies a day while 11-year-old Marta cared for the older children.

*Five Guatemalan youngsters sit in a van waiting for departure from a Markham, Ill., church as they and their parents with the help of religious activists seek sanctuary in Vermont.*

We mentioned our pleasure at seeing the family's robust health. "Si, gracias a Dios," said Felipe.

But, more than health, we marveled at their capacity for enjoyment. Simply and without pretense they lived every moment and every new experience to the fullest.

The children freely shared the toys provided, laughed with glee at the antics of the chipmunks on television and lovingly cared for the baby so the parents could visit with us. When they left they all shook our hands and expressed profound gratitude.

In the afternoon I stopped at the small sanctuary apartment which they were sharing for a few days with our Salvadoran family.

Elena was winding black silk around a half dozen chairs, the beginning of an ambitious weaving project. A few hours later she had woven the first four inches of a 15-foot-long and eight-inches-wide stole. Interwoven with the black were lovely designs in pink, gold and green.

Felipe drew a picture showing the finished stole draped around a huge cross in a Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Ariz., in memory of martyred Guatemalan Christians.

Since our sanctuary apartment was already filled to overflowing, this family moved on after a few days to the sanctuary apartment at the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ.

They came as undocumented aliens to fearlessly share the plight of the poor in Guatemala. How much of this suffering is brought on by U.S. support of a corrupt and repressive military regime we will never know.

We were breaking the law by opening our home, inviting prison terms and fines, yet they were to us like a benediction helping us to see more clearly what the gospel of Jesus is all about.

They left us an example to live more simply and joyfully one day at a time walking in the steps of Jesus.

*Margaretha Ediger is co-pastor of Community Mennonite Church, 16200 S. Kedzie Ave., Markham, IL 60426. Her congregation voted some time ago to be a place of sanctuary for refugees from Central America.*

# Witness for peace in Nicaragua

*Don Longbottom*

Anti-aircraft weapons menaced the skies like olive green spiders as we landed at Managua airport. Our plane glided to a stop well clear of the terminal, another security precaution. No pictures at the airport, please—still more security. There is an eerie feeling to landing in a nation at war with my country. This is Nicaragua, arch-enemy of the United States and vital security threat to the free world.

We are there under the banner of Witness for Peace, an interdenominational, politically independent, non-violent, religiously based group of activists committed to maintaining a continuous presence of observers in the contested areas of Nicaragua. We are there to learn who is telling the truth about the area and to protest against military intervention. We are witnessing for peace.

*Nicaraguan women take part in a celebration in Managua on Feb. 21.*

In the border city of Jalapa we found people surrounded on three sides by the Honduran border and CIA-supported rebels called *contras* who murder, kidnap and destroy farm fields and machinery in the hopes of destabilizing the Nicaraguan government. Opposed to this intervention we found a poor but profoundly spiritual people prepared to die for their new-found freedom. A number of them are critical of their government, but they consider it their government, and they believe that their voices are heard. But are they being heard or are they being duped? Has their revolution been betrayed, as President Reagan has suggested?

Ten miles from Jalapa is an "asientomiento" named Santa Cruz. This is a resettlement area for peasants who have been run off their private property (their farms) by the contras. Santa Cruz was once owned by a Señor Molina, who fled to Honduras at the time of the revolution. Molina was a personal friend of Somoza, the U.S.-supported dictator of Nicaragua who while he owned the land grew mostly tobacco for sale in the United States. Of course, one cannot eat tobacco, and in the words of Pedro Mutit, a peasant farmer with nine children, "Life was very hard under Molina." Today the Molina land is growing rice and potatoes, and the peasants are receiving technical advice from government experts on crop rotation and advanced farming methods. The government finances the overhead at 1 percent interest and tries to provide some modern machinery to assist in the labor. During the harvest each family receives a specified amount of produce per day for their own consumption, and the balance is sold in Managua with the proceeds split among all the workers.

Has the revolution been betrayed? I think not. The people of Nicaragua are better off today than they have ever been in the history of their nation. Even the charge de affairs Gambol at the U.S. embassy admits, "The peasants today are better off than they ever were under Somoza." He was then asked, "Then why are we raining death and destruction on these people?" He answered, "This is all a game. Nicaragua has got to understand that Central America is in the U.S. sphere of influence, and they must learn to conduct themselves accordingly."

The Nicaraguan people don't feel betrayed, but powerful U.S. politicians feel betrayed because they have a sense that the United States was ordained to run the world, and Nicaragua is charting its own course.

Mr. Gambol was asked, "If it's only a game, if the human cost and morality are not to be considered, then how are we different from the Soviet Union?" He had no answer.

And what of the human cost? During my time in Managua I sought out and investigated the Central Children's Hospital for all of Nicaragua. I was led through the hospital by Romeo N. Osequeda, a pediatrician educated in Mexico City. The hospital was tawdry, with peeling paint on the walls. The air outside was above 100°F, and the hospital had no refrigeration. As we entered the burn unit, I was stunned by the screaming of infants. In the unit were little babies all severely burned. Some were so weak that they could only cry silently. Each infant was wrapped in a blanket with a white cream on his or her wounds. No ice, no pain killer, only a blanket and some cream. It is difficult even to diagnose the extent of the injuries because though they have microscopes they don't have light bulbs to put in them. The United States will not sell them the bulbs.

All that Dr. Osequeda could say was, "It is so sad." It is sad and it is morally wrong. Our high ideals are not in evidence in our Central American policies. Please use your voice to urge more humane policies in Central America. Time and again I was told by the Nicaraguan people, "We know that the American people are good, it is the government that so often hurts us."

*Don Longbottom, pastor of the Grace Mennonite Church, Box 387, Pandora, OH 45877, recently returned from a short term of service with Witness for Peace in Nicaragua.*

# Counsel to beginning pastors

*Monty Ledford*

Each person at our annual pastors' retreat in the Eastern District Conference was asked to put in a nutshell their advice to a beginning pastor. These are the responses.

Speak with some authority but without being authoritarian. Meet your people where they are. Work *with* them. Let your children be children. *Becky Bartow*

Don't judge people too quickly. Find out where people are in their pilgrimage, lead them forward one step at a time and let them help you grow. *Dave Bartow*

"Don't lie and don't quit." *Lewis Cretsinger* (quoting a former professor)

Be true to God's Word. Be devoted to your family. Be loving to others. *Richard Early*

Don't try to make your wife over, let her be herself. Help people to not only be saved but to grow afterwards and learn the joy that comes from being good stewards of time, talents and resources. *Ray Frey*

A pastor is a shepherd and will want to be gentle, loving, caring and tender toward God, Jesus, his church and the unchurched. Avoid these three Cs—criticism, complaint and comparison. All tasks and people in the church are equally important: janitor, secretary, pastor, etc. It would be nice if pastors could have one Sunday per month free. We also are fragile and need Christ. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." When you counsel, look into people's eyes and let them see your concern. The problems will be solved quicker, and they will have a more beautiful week. *Geraldine Harder*

Keep Jesus Christ at center stage at all times. Use your time for things that really count. *Milton Harder*

To pastor's wife: Remember first that you are serving God. Be a helpmate to your husband. Be what God wants *you* to be; don't let yourself be put into someone else's mold. *Beatie Hillegas*

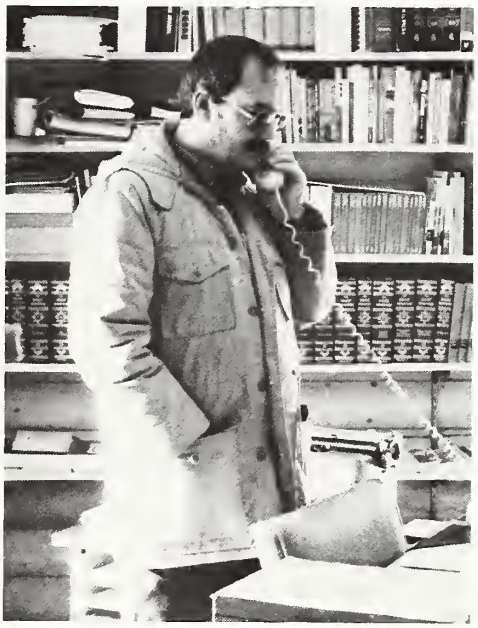
To pastor's wife: Develop interests of your own. Be your own person. Try not to live your life through your husband's career. *Dorothy Freed*

Quoting G. Campbell Morgan's advice to a young minister: "Any road in England will lead to London if you follow it long enough." So, wherever you open the Bible, head for Jesus and you won't go wrong. Take your own growth seriously. Look for God's surprises. *John Freed*

Love, love, love, love and then love. Love God in his three persons, in his Word and in yourself and others. Be a shepherd leading the sheep and yet being a part of them, sharing and caring for them. Don't be too quick to run away from problems but be willing to work through them. *Dave Hillegas*

Be an example. Be a friend. Love your people. Let the joy of salvation be seen in you. *Grace Landis*

Reaffirm your call from God from time to time. Preach the gospel of Christ. Be sincere. Love people into the kingdom through the warmth of your personality. *Bob Landis*



*Dick Hildebrandt, pastor of Church of the Way, Granisle, B.C.*

Quoting a former deacon: "God will have to do more *in* you than he ever does *through* you." You will learn more from your failures than from your successes. *Monty Ledford*

Preach the Word faithfully because you are God's representative. You can't lead anyone to a place where you have not been yourself. *Harold Nussbaum*

Be pleasing to God first of all, you won't be able to please everybody. Keep a sense of humor, be able to laugh at yourself. *Marie Nussbaum*

Be in better communion with God. Care for the problems of your neighbors and seek how to lead them to Christ. *Argentina Peralta*

God calls us not to be successful but to be faithful, and he will be with us always. *Rafael Peralta*

Take yourself as seriously as you take your work. Have a sense of humor. Enjoy your work. *John Schrock*

To the wife: Build your husband up, there are people enough to keep him humble. Accept the demands, especially time demands, that are put on your husband, don't fight them. Work at finding special times to spend together. *Janis Schmidt*

Have an unwavering commitment to the Word of God, a positive attitude of faith and a genuine love for people. *Norman Schmidt*

You should love the folks in your congregation as you would like them to love you. *Alice Stockenus*

Remember whose servant you are and remember that you aren't the only member of God's church on earth. *Grover Stockenus*

Find joy in what you are doing. It is easy to get overwhelmed with all the tasks, so it is important to find this joy. *Loretta Wikerd*

Do not be afraid of new experiences and new understandings. You can do a lot of good if you don't care who gets the credit. *Paul Wikerd*

Be patient. Change takes time and if anything is going to last it will take time to get there. *Judy Winslow*

Congratulations, the local church is where it's at. Your calling both demands and privileges you to understand a broad range of human experience. You will study the Bible, history, psychology, archaeology, etc. No other work allows you to seek to understand so broadly nor know people more deeply. *Mark Winslow*

Take time for personal enrichment through personal Bible study and prayer. Take time to love your spouse and your family. *Don Yoder*

*Monty and Elaine Ledford at the Eastern District's pastors' and spouses' retreat led the opening "icebreaker" in the above manner. This June, Monty assumes a new pastorate at Grand Rapids, Mich.*

# MEDITATION

## Reach for the cereal

I awoke convinced that the sandman had given me an overdose. Still half asleep, I struggled out of bed and into the kitchen. My husband had finished his breakfast and started preparing mine. That made me feel guilty. I tried to redeem the time by flying into my husband's breakfast dishes. But his cereal bowl was missing.

I asked him for it and learned that he had eaten his cereal from the pan. How dreadful. I spent the next few minutes scouring my brain. I needed a plan to convert him to eating his cereal from a bowl. An appeal to tradition would never convince him. So I carefully added up all the extra vitamins and minerals he'd get from the cereal bowl. It came to a whopping zero. What a shock. Cereal bowls have no food value.

I was horrified to realize the undue importance I had been placing upon dishes. What could they add to food? Any clean container can hold food.

I wondered how often I had missed a spiritual feast from the Lord because it came in the wrong container. When God serves a meal, he uses ordinary people—earthenware pottery according to the Bible (2 Corinthians 4:7). Pottery breaks easily and is inclined to crack and chip; it makes about as imperfect a container as you could find. But that's what God uses. He wants people to reach for the food, not the dishes.

Lord, help me to listen for your voice from unexpected sources, whether you speak with the powerful resonance of authority or the tiny voice of a child.

*Marilyn Black Phemister*

## They left her to our care

Sitting at my desk reviewing some lecture material for the coming school year, I was interrupted by, "Some parents from British Columbia would like to see you." Students were arriving for the new year.

We greeted each other and bantered good-naturedly about the weather, the flatness of Saskatchewan—small things, safe things. Mother was nervously puttering around the room, wanting to be of some service.

When it was time to leave their daughter behind, mother's tears came. Her eyes became wells of emotion. It was hard. A son was to leave the following week for Taiwan. Three years. Now, suddenly, the daughter was at school far from home.

Mother and father summoned their courage and returned home. I was touched by the spirit of these parents. They were willing to allow the children to make their own decisions. Certainly an act of faithfulness.

I am filled with joy—a sense of mission—knowing that parents such as these have entrusted their children to us, to further the task of training them in the way they should go.

*Walter Bergen*

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How do Christians live as salt and light in the world? Do we make a difference? What is a Christian lifestyle? Should Christians feel inwardly different?

This issue touches several sensitive areas of Christian attitude and witness. Our prayer is that it may move us closer to a freeing lifestyle in Jesus Christ.


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# editorial

## The freeing lifestyle

Mennonites have a history of speaking out for the simple life. We resonate with the Jerusalem Bible translation of Ecclesiastes 7:29, "God made people simple; people's complex problems are of their own devising."

The *More With Less Cookbook* and other books on simple living have been good sellers among our people. These books speak of an uncluttering in our lives that most of us know we need. Most other "answer" books advocate that we trade one preoccupation for another one that is supposedly better for us.

The evidence shows we can do more gardening and grow natural produce. Homemade food, clothes and furniture often mean more than products bought in a store. Something happens to us when we create things with our own hands instead of bartering for them with coins, paper currency and plastic cards.

God created people in a simple, natural setting—idyllic. But Adam and Eve somehow found irresistible temptations even in Eden. Was it all too simple? Is there something about our self-devised complex problems that makes them seem like a positive alternative?

I believe this strikes close to home. Our life has inward and outward dimensions. Somehow from the beginning we do not cope well with our creatureliness. The human free will, led on by the powerful tempting of the master deceiver, the Devil, inwardly chafes at the idea of God. We are ready victims for the serpent who offers that we "will be like God" (Genesis 3:5) and have our eyes opened. It would give us unlimited insight and vision. And why should it not be so? God gave us the gift of choice.

That's the simplicity trap. Logically unfolded, the simple human and divine drama should conclude with a welding of the human into the divine. Anything else goes counter to logic and ultimately leaves us to a great and unsolvable mystery. To the scientific analyst it may appear that a cosmic papa entertains his whims and fancies with human puppets. He is omnipotent and omniscient, so why does he permit confusion?

The clue is already obvious in Eden. Adam and Eve cannot resist the trap. Logic wins over mystery. It continues so within many of us. And the eyes are opened as we choose what seems sensible. The consequences follow. It is logical now to set ourselves apart from God and to clothe our special identity (Genesis 3:7).

Ironically, as Adam and Eve began the "cover-up" game, they created a new mystery. When we refuse the inward mystery, the result is an outward camouflage lifestyle. Even the word person comes from the Latin "persona," which means "mask." We pretend to be. Our outward adornments and preoccupation with gimmicks and gadgetry hide our inward selves from one another and, we hope, hide our true selves from God.

Who could have guessed that Germaine Greer, who rallied women into the sexual revolution 14 years ago with her book *The Female Eunuch*, would step out in 1984 with a prophetic call to repentance? Her book *Sex and Destiny: The Politics of Human Fertility* says we have made sex as trivial as a handshake. The mysteries of sex have been removed, but the consequences are devastating.

Greer argues that our liberated society hates children. I heard her explain on a national television interview why this is bad. "In having, nurturing and loving children, we discover part of our spirituality," she said. The corollary of this is that in refusing to have children (Is this perhaps one of the most convincing challenges to abortion?) we lose or deny part of our spirituality.

She goes so far as to suggest that our fertility control is directly linked to a willingness to wage nuclear war. The latter is simply another form of outward logic.

The answer then lies not in a logical simplicity. It somehow remains related to the mystery of creation. What we must pursue then is not so much a simple and logical life, but a freeing life. We need to believe in and accept life as a mysterious gift that is deeply cared for by God. Our freedom is connected to living and sharing this mysterious adventure with God and with other people.

It will generate an inward spirituality that defies definition, and it will motivate an outward lifestyle of creative respect for all of creation together with an attitude of saving adventure in all our people relationships. While it may not seem nor be simple, it will be freeing. Our anxieties are lessened because by faith we can live and celebrate these human mysteries. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

ON CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:13 JUNE 19, 1984

INSIDE: Exciting CHM stories

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**While among our own ethnic Mennonite churches we gave little place to women in "brotherhood meetings," our mission boards seemed glad to send them to build and lead churches both overseas and in home mission fields.**

# Single women in the cities

*Lois Barrett*

When Elizabeth Foth went as a missionary to Altoona, a small city in the mountains of western Pennsylvania, in 1918, she became part of a growing number of single women serving as home missionaries. Unwelcome to minister in the rural congregations in which they had grown up, they did find avenues of ministry in American cities under the General Conference Mennonite Home Mission Board, just as their sisters in the church were serving under the Foreign Mission Board on Indian reservations or overseas.

While many Mennonite women could not participate in the brotherhood meetings in their home communities, they could participate in decision making, teach, pray in public and supervise mission finances on the mission fields. Although only one General Conference Mennonite congregation had ordained a woman for pastoral ministry by 1918, many women like Elizabeth Foth had been ordained for missionary service.

The Home Mission Board did not send single women to the new churches among ethnic Mennonites, but these women could serve in the "foreign field" of the cities, whose population was swelling with millions of new immigrants from eastern and southern Europe, many of them Catholics who spoke neither English nor German.

Like many women in home missions, Elizabeth Foth had first wanted to be a missionary to India where the General Conference had begun sending missionaries in 1900. But she later heard God's call to city missions and became the General Conference's first salaried missionary in Altoona.

When Foth arrived in 1918 she found a mission already started under the auspices of the nearby rural Roaring Spring Mennonite Church, led by Elder Jacob Snyder. A lay deacon, L. L. Shaw, conducted most of the services in Altoona.

Joining the mission work the following year was Martha Franz, with Gerhard and Ruth Foth Baergen coming in 1921. The mission bustled with Sunday school, Christian Endeavor, Junior League, Bible studies, cottage prayer meetings, midweek prayer meetings and distribution of clothing.

It was a busy schedule with which many other city missionaries could identify. For example, Catherine Niswander at First Mennonite Church in Chicago from 1914 to 1928 made as many as 581 calls a year. Niswander's work in Chicago involved virtually every part of the church work except preaching. When the mission was without a superintendent or when the superintendent was visiting conference churches to raise money for a church building or when he went to work in a department store because the mission board had not been able to send them their full wages, Niswander was in charge.

"When Rev. (W. W.) Miller was gone, I

saw to it that we had preachers for morning and evening. I took care of the funds; that's when we bought the mission house," Niswander later reminisced.

The messages of Niswander and Foth, like that of many other Mennonite missionaries in the cities, had a fundamentalist or dispensationalist flavor. At that time Mennonite colleges offered no specialized training in city mission work, so those who wanted that training went to the non-denominational Bible institutes. Foth had attended Torrey's in Los Angeles (now Biola University) and Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Niswander had received her education at Fort Wayne Bible School in Indiana.

The years 1908 to about 1930 were golden years of city missions among Mennonites. They were also golden years for single Mennonite women in home missions. Not only were there Foth and Niswander. Pearl Ramseyer served in Peoria, Ill., in the Central Conference mission. Elizabeth Braun, Susan Franz, Ina Feighner and Lavina Burkhalter served in Los Angeles. Dorothy Goodman (Brundage) and deaconess Elizabeth Hirschler worked in the Jewish mission in Chicago. In Kansas, Minnesota, Indiana and Illinois, the deaconess movement was flourishing among Mennonites and attracting many never-married women or childless widows.

But the momentum did not continue. Money available for home missions decreased during the Depression. Funds were diverted from city missions to help support ministers from among the new Russian Mennonite immigrants to Canada. In 1942, when a young woman soon to graduate from Fort Wayne Bible School applied to the General Conference Home Mission Board concerning missionary work, the board discouraged her, writing, "We have only one such [woman] worker, Miss Niswander."

Elizabeth Foth was one of the women missionaries who had resigned. In 1921 she and co-worker Martha Franz had expanded their work to Coupon, a mountain town nine miles from Altoona. Their new project proved controversial. Jacob Snyder, their supervising elder, began accusing them of claiming their ordinations as missionaries as proof of their right to administer the ordinances of the church. He complained to the Home Mission Board of which he was a member, "I am writing this letter in reference to the lady workers on the field, that they may not be able to conduct religious services outside of Altoona, select their own speakers and go around for meetings."

At Coupon, Foth and Franz had started a Sunday school and were holding preaching services on Sunday afternoons.

The two women responded to Snyder that they had as much right to administer the ordinances of the church as did Shaw, the preacher at Altoona, since he as a deacon was not ordained and they were. Yet Shaw had been performing marriages.

By August 1922 friction between Foth and Franz on the one hand and Snyder and the Home Mission Board on the other had reached the point that Foth and Franz resigned. Both women went to New York City to work with non-denominational rescue missions. In a downtown tenement section Foth formed a women's Bible class of over 100 members which grew into a Saturday night mission.

By 1929 she had found a site for a more permanent rescue mission which she established at 215 Hoyt Street in Brooklyn, a tough, red-light neighborhood. Much of the mission's work was with "the fallen women of the community," and Foth visited not only tenement houses but houses of prostitution to talk to the women and help them begin a new profession.

Catherine Niswander

Elizabeth Foth

Although Elizabeth Foth resigned from conference mission work after four years, Catherine Niswander had a career of more than 50 years with the Home Mission Board (later the Board of Missions). Although hesitant to preach, she assumed many other responsibilities of a mission superintendent in Portland, Ore., where she served from 1928 to 1937 as the mission's only full-time worker. An anniversary booklet from the First Mennonite Church in Philadelphia, where she later served, listed her as "superintendent" in Portland, although the mission board correspondence never gave her that title.

"I did all except the preaching," she told me in an interview in Bluffton, Ohio, in 1978, shortly before her death. "All" included janitorial work for the church building.

In Philadelphia, minister J. J. Plenert did encourage her to do preaching when he was out of town.

"A number of times I had the sermon," she related. "Rev. Plenert told me that one time he had asked a deacon how he liked my sermon and the deacon had told him, 'It's the best sermon I've heard in a long time.' Rev. Plenert had laughed and then the man had said, 'Oh, I don't mean it that way, I mean of the people we've had to get in to preach.' "

Single women in city mission work sometimes needed courage for more than preaching. Elizabeth Foth, who had been raised in rural Kansas, wrote to the Home Mission Board early in her term at Altoona of her fears of walking two or three blocks from the street car at 10 p.m. or staying all night with a sick woman whose husband and roomer had been in jail several times and were often drinking alcohol. But she wrote, "I have the confidence God will take care of me, therefore *I will go*."

On another occasion Foth encountered three rough-looking men on a dark street corner. She walked up to them and handed them a tract. One of the men asked her, "Aren't you afraid to be here alone at this time of night?"

Foth repled, "Afraid? Why should I be afraid when the Lord is standing right here by my side? Besides, this bag is filled with dynamite."

The man turned the tract over in his hand, "What religion is this?"

"The gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ," she said. "If you believe and receive it, you can be made a new man in Christ."

With the man still looking at the tract, Elizabeth Foth walked to the next corner with her tract case in her hand. •

**God took both Darlene and Ruth and made them feel that their mission field is here in the Fairhill section of Philadelphia.**

# Two contem

*John L. Freed*

Rows of tenement houses, cluttered streets, crowded buses and a struggling community is the setting for the life and ministry of two creative Mennonite women. **Ruth Hunsberger** and **Darlene Mumbauer** live and minister in the Fairhill section of North Philadelphia. As a part of the team that staff Crossroads Community Center, Ruth and Darlene have become a visible presence in the community.

Both women come from a rural Mennonite community and church background. However, this city has become their home. They live in a small corner house on Indiana Street, several blocks from the church and the community center. It is close enough to walk, yet far enough away to provide a retreat when privacy is needed.

Darlene has a vibrant, bubbly personality. She hails from the Quakertown area and from the East Swamp Mennonite Church. She arrived in Philadelphia in 1968. A registered nurse and a graduate of Grace College of the Bible, she had visions of becoming a missionary on a foreign field. In the interim she responded to a short-term voluntary service assignment in Philadelphia and never left. God turned her around, broke down her resistance to life in the city and planted her in the Fairhill community.

Ruth, a quiet, lanky farm girl from Blooming Glenn, Pa., arrived several years later. A psychology and sociology graduate from Juniata College, she wanted to be a social worker. Her experience soon left her disillusioned with the secular approach to community services.

She applied to Crossroads Community Center for a job and is now a vital part of the staff, an active member of the Second Mennonite Church and a visible participant in the community that has become her home.

Recently in conversation with these two women, we reflected and discussed their call, commitment and ministry. Both women thoroughly enjoy their work. There is evidence of contentment, maturity and fulfillment in their lives. They would not exchange places with anyone. Fairhill is home.

What makes their lives so full? Why does ministry in the city prove so satisfying? What holds these women to a life in a community avoided by much of the Christian church?

Crossroads Community Center shapes the lives and the schedule of their daily routine. The center is sponsored by the Eastern District General Conference Mennonite churches. It is linked locally to the Second Mennonite Church in Philadelphia.

I suggested the women describe a day's activities. Ruth responded, "A day includes informal conversation with people on the street, distribution of food and clothes to needy families and individuals, crisis counseling, visits with pastor Carlton Minnis (Second Mennonite Church) to the local prisons, appearances in court, follow-up visits and correspondence to the people who have been transferred to the state penitentiary and a lot of supportive counseling to people who feel trapped with nowhere to go."

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# rary women servants in the city

Darlene's day is different, but is as full. Her activities include boys' and girls' clubs, tutoring classes, piano lessons for community people, sewing classes, mothers' clubs, family nights and a half-time job at St. Christopher's Hospital. Darlene works the night shift so she has more daytime hours to give to the center.

"Oh," added Darlene, "we forgot to mention the gardening." Every summer gardening is a significant part of their ministry. Four vacant lots are cleared, worked over with a Rototiller and planted.

Ruth commented, "Many of the people in Fairhill have family backgrounds either in the South or in rural Puerto Rico. They appreciate the efforts that go into giving their children and grandchildren a feel for gardening. It feels great to get real dirt under our fingernails. Gardening links us with the community people and their aspirations. We all share the work and the produce when it comes."

"Why is it," I asked, "when we take an overview of urban Mennonite ministries we usually find significant women pouring their lives out? These women are often unheralded, at times unnoticed and frequently unrewarded by their peers. But they are there."

There was an obvious silence after this question. Ruth finally responded, "I guess it's the nature of women to pour their lives out. I seldom think of it that way. The people in the community have become my family. Their joys and concerns have become mine."

"Tasks that we would never do at home," added Darlene, "we find ourselves doing here. Back home I would never run the Rototiller. That was my brothers' job. But here we do whatever the occasion demands."

We began to focus their feelings about the discussion in the wider church on the role of women. Both expressed discomfort with women in the pastoral role. Darlene pointed out the wide range of possibilities for women in traditional roles. Ruth felt the ongoing discussion in the wider church was healthy. However, she felt the real issue is biblical interpretation. They both felt the discussions did not really affect their lives because they are too deeply involved in their work. There was no time or energy left over to discuss the issue locally.

"Needs emerge," commented Ruth, "and we respond. We don't ask if the job belongs to a male or female. We believe we are guided by the Holy Spirit."

Our discussion moved to other areas of the church. Both women are concerned about the unequal distribution of wealth in the world. They also expressed concern that in our drive to become successful we often lose our vision for ministry. "People are always telling us about their prayers," expressed Darlene, "but I really think they pray more for our safety than for our ministry. Whenever there is a break-in or when things are stolen, there seems to be more concern about economics than about people. The fears and the violence get highlighted while ministry is overlooked. I feel there is more concern about things than about people."

Ruth voiced concern about the influx of Mennonite young people into the city. Many come for professional reasons. While this has its value, it adds to the dichotomy between the wealthy and the poor. The poor are often viewed as objects for ministry, rather than as people with feelings and needs. Often we only view the urban community as a place that absorbs and eats up our mission dollars. We fail to see the resources of the urban poor. Their resources cannot be measured in dollars and cents. The struggles of the urban community often develop a "soul life" that is not evident in more affluent communities. Often the drive to get ahead, either economically or professionally, leaves us ill-equipped to understand incarnational ministries with the poor.

We concluded our discussion with a focus on personal resourcing and growth. I focused the need for personal growth as a vital component in effective ministry. If we are not growing we dry up and burn out. Several areas emerged that were important to Ruth and Darlene. Wednesday evening Bible study and prayer time at Second Mennonite Church was focused by Ruth. Morning quiet time and Bible reading has a priority for Darlene. Both identified the value of specific Christian radio programs along with a resource of Christian music.

The discussion concluded with an awareness of God's presence in the context of two Christian women who are faithfully walking a pathway as servants of Jesus Christ. •

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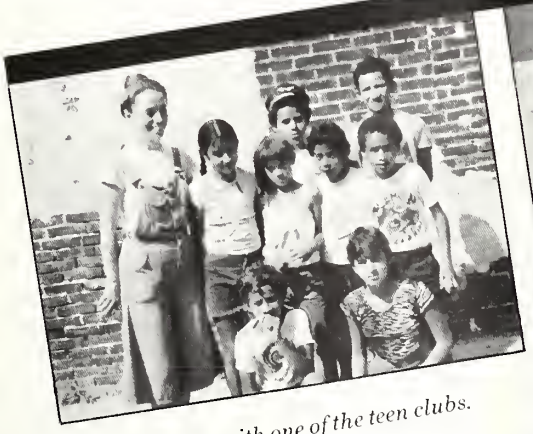


*Darlene works with one of the teen clubs.*

*Ruth helps with painting one of the rooms at the Crossroads Center.*

**Native women are often the backbone or leader-encouragers in their churches.**

# Women in Mennonite native churches

*Pearl Janzen*

When the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council meets, it includes several women who have been providing strong leadership in their communities. Since the titles of pastor or deacon don't fit, they usually don't have a title. But they still serve as the backbone or leader-encouragers of small fellowships because they see no one else doing it. Mennonite native churches depend on these leaders.

**Ida Mae Murdock**, whose Indian name means Walking Bear, came from Oraibi, Ariz., the oldest continuously inhabited Hopi village in the United States. Of Pueblo origin, her people are mostly dryland farmers. They grow five or six varieties of beans, several kinds of melons and corn—their staple food.

Hopis make up the only tribe that has never gone to war against the United States. Their name means "peaceful people." They industriously build their own stone quarried homes and make crafts from desert materials.

Ida Mae has made children a large part of her life. She studied how to teach them at the Riverside Indian School in California and Northern Arizona University. She has taught many children to read, write and do mathematics in Oklahoma, Nebraska and Oregon before coming to Phoenix, Ariz.

In her later years she came to Kykotsmovi, Ariz., to be with her mother. During this time she taught at the Hopi Mission School. She eventually served on the Hopi Mission School Board. She also helped form the Moencopi Mennonite Church, which she attended until moving to Oraibi a year ago.

Just before retiring she taught music at the Tuba City, Ariz., primary school. She liked the instrumental music and the action music games. Now she volunteers once a week at the Moencopi Day School and teaches youngsters at the Oraibi Church to play the recorder.

She serves now as the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council representative for Arizona.

Learning is an ongoing adventure for Ida Mae, who has recently learned shorthand and Spanish. She is an avid reader and has a curiosity like her grandfather, who helped and traveled with early Mennonite missionary H. R. Voth.

Creativity keeps her excited about life. She paints, watercolors, collects lots of things and enjoys gardening.

But most of all, people—of any race, color, creed or age—are part of Ida Mae Murdock's world. She likes to be where the action is, whether it is at a guitar session with the voluntary service workers and Catholic sisters, at visits with students or at her home when she entertains some wanderer who needs a place to stay.

**Marietta Tewa** lives just a few steps from the kiva where the Hopi religious events take place. She is able to sleep through the all-night drumming and humming sounds of the singers. Yet she carries out some of the duties expected of a relative at those special occasions, such as preparing special foods for visitors. She is a good wife, neighbor and friend.

Marietta is also a spiritual resource for people in need. People see in her a quiet peace, a way of coping and a strength available if they seek it. Marietta is active in the Moencopi Mennonite Fellowship, Prayer Day, a gathering of Hopi Christians, Hopi Mennonite Church Council and Mennonite Indian Leaders Council gatherings. She enjoys traveling to the MILC meetings.

The mention of piñions is something that perks up any Hopi woman. Marietta is no exception. Going to the Grand Canyon to gather piñon nuts is never too much work or trouble.

Woven yucca sifter baskets are Marietta's special art. Her baskets are bought by the Moencopi Mennonite work program for resale. Many times the demand is greater than the supply.

Marietta enjoys singing Hopi hymns and knows many of them by heart. You can hear her recite Psalms, read the Bible in Hopi or English and tell of her deep love for her Lord and Savior. •

*Pearl Janzen, Box 232, Tuba City, AZ 86045, is a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker in the Moencopi, Ariz., unit.*

# Driving a bargain

*Calvin Redekop*

Getting the best of a used car salesman has to be the most challenging sport among us. Last fall I thought I had finally done it. But early this spring my son, who had not been too enthused when I presented the car to him, called and said the transmission had exploded. The car dealer apologized for it as unusual ("Maybe it happens once in 1,000 cars") and then said there was nothing that could be done. So I sold it back to him for junk at 25 percent of my cost. What galled me most was that I had long ago given up trying to get a good deal on a used car, so why was I being punished again?

The desire to drive bargains is strong within us. A friend recently told me of experiences he had with some members in his church. He has a handy truck which he uses only occasionally. A friend asked whether he might borrow it for a day. When he returned it, he said, "I kept track of the mileage and at x cents per mile I figure $x is what I owe you."

My friend, knowing the mileage and the true cost of owning a truck, said, "Oh, never mind, it's OK. You don't owe me anything." Later another brother came to ask about the truck. When he returned, he said, "Here's $x and thanks much for the use of it." My friend said, "But that is too much." To this the borrower replied, "Look, I know what it costs to run a vehicle and I am glad someone has one available when I need one. Thanks and please keep the money." "You know," he said with a chuckle, "I have had numerous occasions where I could return the favors to the second person but somehow I have not been able to be as helpful to the first." He feels both paid what they felt the service was worth and both are getting their investment back.

Whether it's driving a bargain (a used car) or trading stamps, the attitude and intentions make a great difference in what we do and how it affects our long-range experiences. The ethics of economic exchange is a vast and complex issue, almost as broad as economics, for almost all goods and services are produced for others for a margin. Making a profit on exchanging or producing goods and services that are needed is a respectable activity and has been for many centuries. How much margin has been a problem.

*Who knows? One of these days I may show up at church driving around in a real bargain.*

Christians have thought about this for many generations. In the 13th century Thomas Aquinas concocted the "just price" idea which stipulated that people can expect a limited margin or return on their activities or investment. Although it focused on charging interest (usury was considered exceeding the "just price"), it applied to most economic activities.

In the 19th century the "market economy" became dominant. Its essence is that the price is determined by what the market will bear. Charge interest on your money or price your services or goods according to what the buyer will pay. It was assumed that "buyers will beware," meaning they will act in their own best interests.

The variety of approaches to this theory is illustrated in the experiences my friend had. One customer based his ideas on the market theory (pay what the market will bear) and the other's idea was based on some "just" theory.

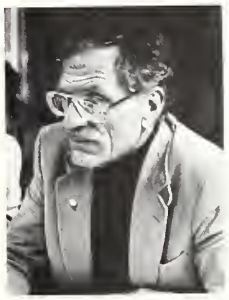
Where would we be if we did not charge the going rate for our services or for our goods? If we paid what the commodity or service is worth, it might mean paying much more in some cases and much less in others. But, you say, we are helpless to do anything about it. If we don't haggle with the used car dealers we will become victims or naive fools. It may be true that we cannot substantially change the economic system, but we must heed biblical teachings.

What does the Bible tell us about driving bargains? In some ways the biblical teaching is confusing or upside down. In one story Jesus lauds the employer who pays the laborer who comes at the last hour as much as the one who worked all day (Matthew 20:1-16). In an encounter with a convert, Zacchaeus, Jesus approves of a person who returns fourfold to anyone whom he might have defrauded (Luke 19:2). In another place Jesus says that with whatever measure we gauge others, we also will be judged (Matthew 7:1-2). Elsewhere he suggests that we give and not expect anything in return (Matthew 5:43).

What is a just price? What interest rate can I charge? When should I haggle over a price? Tourists to Peru know they can work the price down on the beautiful alpaca wool at least 50 percent before they buy.

There seems to be almost no way to get the New Testament, or Old for that matter, to give us specific guidelines on profit margins. It seems we need to return to the tried and true last resort—the Golden Rule. If I treat others as I would be treated, I should know what a used car is worth. And if it turns out to be a lemon, I could feel good about going back because I would probably have some goodwill left.

I am anxious to hear what my used car dealer will say when I come to buy the next used car. The way my alter ego has it, he owes me about $475 from the last deal. So he owes me one. Who knows? One of these days I may be driving around in a bargain.



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# Home missions: full brakes or full throttle?

*E. Stanley Bohn*

Instead of a report on home mission activities at Bethlehem '83, the Commission on Home Ministries described what we thought our mission work in Canada and the United States should be for the next three years.

The cost of this multifaceted effort was $200,000 per year and included establishing congregations with the wave of new immigrants arriving in the '70s and '80s, language mission broadcasts, church planting training retreats and evangelism workshops. Enthusiasm was high and it wasn't hard to document the need.

Support from the Bethlehem '83 delegates was encouraging, but the implications were scary. It would move our denomination further from our German heritage toward being a multiethnic group. The Bible often refers to the church as such a body. Our image as reluctant evangelists, embarrassed by teachings that led people to be conscientious objectors, would have to change into being more like the early Anabaptists.

The reality of finances was faced by the General Board 10 weeks after the Bethlehem '83 sessions. We concluded that there was no way this effort could be launched without taking away funds from existing mission programs and essential education projects.

Now what? It was hard to let the idea go.

It wasn't a new idea. Church planting has been happening since the resurrection.

In 1961 John Howard Yoder's pamphlet "As You Go" showed how church planting could be done by lay people. The conference's annual "It Matters Where You Scatter" posters try to keep the same idea before us. Area conferences have been setting church planting goals and one has made a slide set and a brochure encouraging ordinary people to share their faith through the planting of new churches. Some people have been active without any conference help.

However, it would make this a priority for our total conference rather than for a few people. Church planting is one of those things everyone favors but is rarely tested intentionally by larger bodies of believers.

Budget time for 1984 was coming in March. The Commission on Home Ministries revised its $200,000 plan into a drastically scaled down plan costing $30,000 for a half-time recruiter to find 100 church planting people a year, to run workshops to equip these 100 people in sharing their faith in Christ and to sponsor retreats for follow-up to this ministry. It assumed a partnership in which local churches would help support interested members.

The main thrust was to find people who would plant congregations in 50 different locations chosen by district and provincial mission committees. We would invite these people to consider becoming self-supporting missionaries.

March came and there still was no money. CHM affirmed again that church planting, with our peace witness, is our priority.

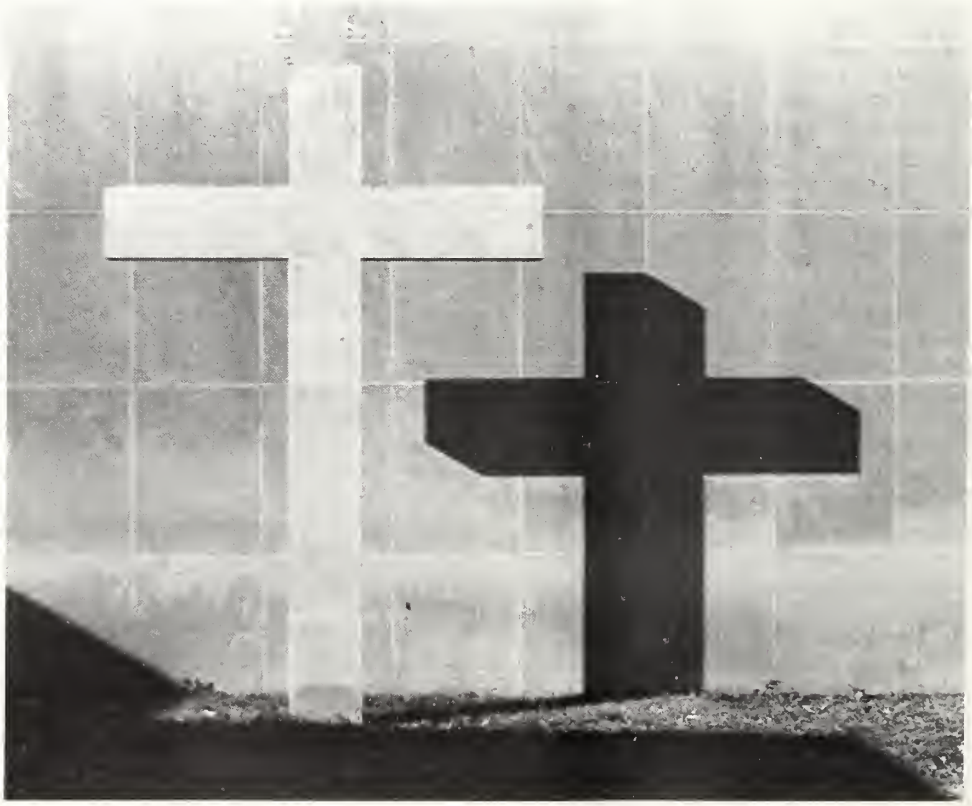
CHM received 93.5 percent of its 1983 budget, $65,000 less than expected. Painful cutbacks were made in Mennonite Voluntary Service, Media, Hispanic Ministries, the Peace and Justice poverty program, Congregational Life and even in Church Planting, with more cuts to come later in Mennonite Indian Leaders Council and other places.

Any additional program seemed unthinkable. After that difficult March meeting, the vision should have been declared dead and things should have returned to normal. But they haven't . . . at least not yet.

On May 23 a group of interested people planned to meet to see if a new church planting emphasis could be launched without special funding, just by spreading the word and asking people to help. Some people in Chicago, Elkhart and Winnipeg were to be present "by phone." We have no travel money.

Maybe the money shortage is one way the Lord tells us we shouldn't do this with budgets and staff but by spreading

*Church planting is one of those topics everyone favors until we see the shadow of the cross falling upon us. Then we suddenly have second thoughts. It's easier to appoint and pay others or at least to pray for them.*



the word that it's time to share Christ with others. Maybe he is telling us his Spirit will provide. Without a denominational staff and structure the church in China increased tenfold from the time the missionaries had to leave after World War II until the present.

It seems hard to do it that way, but maybe we should look to the Holy Spirit for a new Pentecost in our whole conference instead of leaving it to staff and an organized committee.

*Our image as reluctant evangelists, embarrassed by teaching that led people to be conscientious objectors, would have to change into being more like the early Anabaptists.*

Church planting that can contact unreached people is important. It's not only that a war-addicted world needs to hear about the resurrection power to go through the painful withdrawal from that addiction and to live another way, but answering the biblical call is the only way we have ever found salvation for generation after generation. Our own trust in the Lord shrivels if we don't venture out and invite others to join us in our faith walk.

We lose our understanding of the faith if we don't have to explain it to Christians and non-Christians who are pursuing other gods.

The "each in his own tongue" experience at Pentecost, Peter's experience with Cornelius in Acts 10 and the Jerusalem council discussion in Acts 15 emphasize the sharing of Christ with people outside of our group.

There is a peculiar difference between our mission work overseas and here at home. Overseas we tend to be *intentional*, hearing proposals on what we could do and sending missionaries to do it. At home, except for our work with native people that was started by our "overseas" mission board, we have tended to take opportunities that happen to us. We related to black people because of the location of the seminary in Chicago or because of a neighborhood change in Philadelphia. We related to Chinese people because of unsolicited offers of help from Stephen Lee, Peter Lin, Adam Liu and others. Antonio Arevalo, Julio Duenas and others helped us get a new start in Hispanic ministries. Much of our church planting came from the "diaspora" when 1-W and other COs went to urban areas to study or work in the urban migrations of the last 40 years.

Thanks be to God for what has happened to us without intention. But there is a price for doing mission work by accident. It doesn't inconvenience like it would if we chose to do it intentionally. Our careers and consumer goals don't get confronted in the way they do when we choose to follow God's call into mission.

When we do not intentionally start new congregations where they are needed, there is little chance to say, "So the job market doesn't want to use your experience and training, but God does." And the danger of being a missionary or even being a Christian can take second place to building our careers without ever being questioned. Careerism can easily become our religion, and the call to mission is left for others.

In home mission work, unlike overseas missions, where certain skills and specialties are needed, God can use almost any skill or age group. There are all kinds of openings for self-supporting missionaries. And we can discover the real reason why we are here.

There is evidence of such happenings throughout history (see some of the articles in this issue), and it continues among us today. People who are highly trained in specialized skills may be unable to find appropriate jobs. Some have become disillusioned with the lack of meaning in their jobs. A growing number have taken available jobs in urban or rual areas where they could become group leaders, deacons and deaconesses, in settings that provide life-changing challenges.

So that's the story of the home mission idea to find 100 church planting support people a year to serve in 50 home mission locations. Whatever we are able to do or not to do, I hope it won't prevent us from hearing God's call about what he wants us to do and has promised to help us do in our mission together wherever we are as believers in Christ.

*E. Stanley Bohn is the executive secretary of the Commission on Home Ministries, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**More than 80,000 people** packed Managua's baseball stadium at the Sunday rally which concluded a week of evangelistic meetings with Argentine Alberto Mottessi as the preacher. Support for the campaign was massive. The Montessi meetings were taken as evidence that religious liberty—for Protestants, at least—under the Sandinista regime has not in any way been curtailed.

**Natives from Canada,** the United States, Paraguay and Central America and disabled people will be able to participate in meetings organized by Mennonite Central Committee Canada Native Concerns and Handicap Concerns at the Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg, France. Native Concerns will conduct a native caucus which will allow native Indian Mennonites to discuss concerns and will hold a public meeting. MCC Canada Handicap Concerns will conduct two workshops, an interest group and a celebration rally.

# NEWS

## Peace, mission groups to meet at Strasbourg

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—An International Mennonite Peace Committee (IMPC) meeting and a third world mission consultation will be held in connection with the XI Mennonite World Conference Assembly in Strasbourg next month. The mission consultation will take place July 18-23, just prior to MWC, while IMPC's meetings will run during world conference week.

**Peace Committee**

A peace resource center will be open daily in the Palais des Congres under the coordination of the European Mennonite Peace Committee. Sylvie Gudin of Strasbourg is serving as coordinator for the center, which will offer films, literature displays provided by a number of different groups and agencies, and people from various countries who will be willing to talk informally on peace issues.

The IMPC will be in charge of a peace and justice interest group and a peace and justice working group. The interest group will meet from 4:15 to 5:30 Wednesday through Friday and is open to all.

The working group is for invited persons with certain offices or background and will meet from 2:00 to 3:30 Wednesday through Saturday.

Interest group topics and speakers are "Apartheid in South Africa"—Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers with Mukanza Ilunga (Zaire), moderator; "The Church and Human Rights"—Daniel Garcia (Argentina) with Luis Correa (Colombia), moderator; "The Experience of Conscientious Objectors in Switzerland"—Hanspeter Jecker; and "Military Research and Industry in the U.S."—John K. Stoner.

One expanded interest group session is planned for Saturday afternoon, July 28, on the theme "World Hunger and the Arms Race." This session will be held in Erasmus Hall, accommodating 2,000, in the Palais des Congres.

At this session addresses are to be given on "The Violence of Missiles," by Daniel Geiser and Andrea Lange of West Germany. The French Mennonite Peace Committee AMOUR will perform a drama, and there will be a presentation of a written message from the IMPC to Mennonite conferences of the world in charge of Urbane Peachey, IMPC secretary.

The International Mennonite Peace Committee is also cosponsoring a peace study tour in Europe beginning after the XI Assembly. Participants will travel by bus July 31-Aug. 9 through France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, visiting various church and governmental spokespersons and possibly points of tension and/or symbolic witness.

Leadership and planning are being shared with the European Mennonite Peace Committee, consisting of Jean-Jacques Widmer, France; Arno Thimm, Netherlands; Volker Haury, West Germany; and Jan Piet van den Berg, Netherlands.

The International Mennonite Peace Committee will conduct its business and reorganize for the next six years during its working group sessions at the XI Assembly. Currently, members are Milton Belete, Africa; Luis Correa, Latin America; Helmut Harder, North America; Mukanza Ilunga, Africa; Michio Ohno, Asia; Arno Thimm, Europe; and Urbane Peachey, convener.

**Mission consultation**

Mission consultations have been convened by MWC in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1975, and in Hesston, Kan., in 1978 immediately prior to the world conference in Wichita. The current consultation is being planned in conjunction with European Mennonite Evangelization Committee, Council of International Ministries and Council of Mennonite Seminaries.

The theme for the consultation is "Witness, Faithfulness and Renewal." About 75 people have been invited and they include leaders from older and newer churches, East and West, missionaries and seminary faculty, men and women.

A series of four daily presentations has been coordinated by Calvin Shenk and Rolf Kuitse. Thursday the theme will be "Faithfulness in Witness: in the Church," Friday "Faithfulness in Witness: in the World," Saturday "Faithfulness in a Secularized Society" and Sunday "Faithfulness: A Case Study." Small group discussion will follow.

The presentations are based on interviews with and questionnaires filled out by church leaders from around the world.

The afternoon program includes plenary discussion and consideration of case studies from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches worldwide.

Alle Hoekema will be the moderator for the consultation. A summary committee consisting of Leo Laurense, chairman, Takeji Nomura, Wilbert Shenk, Marlin Miller, Mukanza Ilunga and Marta Quiroga de Alvarez, with Hoekema, will lead a final discussion on Sunday.

**A collection of materials** providing comprehensive information about agriculture, hunger, farm issues and land use—and how these issues relate to Christian values—was recently given to the Freeman (S.D.) Junior College Library. The books and pamphlets were transferred to the library from the peace and justice office of the General Conference in Newton, Kan. The materials will be included as part of the Peace and Justice Lending Library of the Northern District Conference. For more information write the Peace and Justice Lending Library, Freeman Junior College, Box 748, Freeman, SD 57029.

**Kindred Press books,** effective July 1, will be available to the general trade (wholesalers, bookstores, library distributors, colleges and seminaries, professors, institutional and public libraries) through the worldwide distribution network of Herald Press. Kindred Press will continue to serve retail accounts in its own denominational constituency. (Kindred Press is the imprint of the Mennonite Brethren Churches of Canada and the United States.)

**Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section**, meeting in Winnipeg for its semiannual meeting May 18-19, agreed to invite Japanese Mennonites to send a peace missioner to Canada and the United States. The peace missioner would share a peace perspective out of the Japanese church and explain Japanese Christian concern over the pressures on Japan to increase its military role in Asia.

# Epidemic in India requiring medicinal, educational solutions

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—An outbreak of dysentery in West Bengal, India, has reached epidemic proportions. Recent reports indicate that over 1,400 people have died as a result of the disease.

The first case of bacillary dysentery was reported in West Bengal in February. Gradually more and more were affected and by early May 1,399 deaths had been reported with over 36,000 affected. The problem continues unabated and has now enterd Calcutta.

The state was caught unprepared with a shortage of Halogen tablets (for water purification), oral rehydration salts (ORS) and drugs. The lack of proper drinking water facilities, the sale of cut fruit, unhealthy sanitary habits and bacteria which has become drug-resistant aggravated the situation. Study teams have not yet been able to determine the nature of the bacteria responsible for the epidemic.

The government, with active participation by voluntary agencies, is now working urgently to bring the situation under control.

Mennonite Central Committee is working in close cooperation with West Bengal Voluntary Health Association (WBVHA) to help provide needed medicines as well as information to the public about the illness and its prevention. MCC will also contribute between $10,000 and $15,000 to WBVHA's program.

At a meeting of the WBVHA on May 3 it was decided to print 100,000 leaflets in Bengali outlining simple precautionary measures, to purchase 200,000 Halogen tablets, 5,000 Oral rehydration salt packets and 100,000 Furazolidin (anti-bacterial) tablets, and to send 26 medical volunteers to the districts to distribute the materials and mobilize local resources to visit homes and educate families. The group also agreed to advertise precautionary steps in three daily newspapers.

Leaflets printed by WBVHA and distributed to the people free of charge state such simple precautionary measures as washing hands with soap and water before eating meals, boiling drinking water or using Halogen tablets to purify water, using freshly cooked food and keeping flies away from food.

The Halogen and Furazolidin tablets were on hand for the medical volunteers to take with them, but ORS packets were not available. However, the Calcutta Medical College agreed to prepare 5,000 packets immediately at a subsidized rate.

The medical volunteers were given a day-long orientation before they left for various villages with supplies and information. In the villages they contacted the chief medical officer, district magistrates, WBVHA member institutions, and implemented a large-scale educational program on dysentery in conjunction with the government, voluntary agencies and churches in order to reach as many families as possible. Medicines were given away according to needs.

Previously, the government had been distributing Halogen tablets and ORS packets on a limited scale. Their health workers were imparting education wherever possible and treating patients admitted to hospitals.

According to Charles Edwin, assistant director for MCC India, "one of the reasons for the epidemic is lack of safe drinking water facilities in the rural areas."

As this is a major problem which needs to be addressed by the government, MCC workers feel that the best course of action is to provide simple health education.

## *General Board appoints communications director*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church has appointed Larry A. Cornies of Newton, Kan., as its communications director, effective July 1.

Currently associate editor of *The Mennonite* and news director for the denomination, Cornies will assume responsibility for a wide range of both print and electronic communications projects, including the conference's news service as well as some video and film production. He will work with commissions in equipping staff and missionaries for effective communication with supporting congregations and will serve as the conference's primary contact for public media.

*Cornies*

Cornies began work with the General Conference in 1980 after five years of teaching religious studies at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, Ont. He graduated from the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ont., in 1975 with a bachelor's degree in religious studies. Since 1981 he has studied part-time in the master's program in mass communications at Wichita (Kan.) State University.

Cornies is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan. He is married to Jacquelyn (Brown) Cornies, a choreographer. They have three sons, Darryl, Graeme and Andrew.

The GB decided to create the communications position at its Council of Commissions meeting in March.

**Nearly a third of all women workers** regard their jobs as stressful, reports a survey taken among 40,000 readers of four magazines for women. The survey showed that low-level jobs could be just as stressful as executive positions and that the most stressful jobs were those that required a large amount of work but with little direct control over the work or environment.

**Mennonite colonists** from Spanish Lookout, Belize, have donated 20 tons of beans to the El Salvador food program. They also sold another 110 tons of beans at the reduced rate of 12½ cents a pound to be sent to refugees in El Salvador. Mennonite Central Committee covered the shipping costs and bought the 110 tons of subsidized beans at a total cost of $37,000. The beans will be distributed to displaced people within El Salvador as part of a large interchurch food program.

*Salvadoran refugee girl gets a meal.*

# Agricultural exchange leads to increased productivity

Akron, Pa.—Increased production of soybeans in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam was the goal of a recent exchange between agronomists from Cantho University in Vietnam and agricultural workers in Mennonite Central Committee's program in Bangladesh.

Harold Harder, director of MCC's Bangladesh program, and Lee Brockmueller, MCC agriculturist there, visited Vietnam in April as part of the exchange.

The first half of the exchange took place in November 1983, when Dr. Duong and Dr. Tuan, agronomists from Cantho University, spent two weeks in Bangladesh as guests of MCC.

The major objective of the exchange was for the Cantho agriculturists and members of the MCC Bangladesh team to share experiences, problems and research findings related to soybean production, processing and extension. The exchange was particularly relevant because the Mekong Delta soil conditions and climate in Vietnam are similar to those in Bangladesh.

The exchange was initiated as an important first step in a proposed four-year agreement of MCC assistance to the Cantho University's soybean program, designed to increase the production and utilization of soybeans in the Mekong Delta. Currently about 37,500 acres are under soybean cultivation in the Mekong Delta, but research indicates the region could increase its soybean growing area to 1,250,000 acres by using multiple cropping with rice.

There have been problems with soybean production in the Delta. The bean yield is low compared to world average yields, and the high cost of crop protection makes the crop economically unattractive to the farmers. In addition, suitable ways to use soybeans in the traditional diet have not yet been found.

The four-year program of MCC assistance would seek to help the Vietnamese find ways to overcome these problems. MCC assistance, including information (books, journals), technical expertise, and equipment and supplies to the Cantho University soybean program, will help them select and breed high-yielding and disease-resistant varieties and develop suitable cultivation techniques and crop protection. They will also study ways to process soybeans and introduce them to the daily diets of the people.

Louise Buhler, who directs MCC's Vietnam program from Bangkok, notes that "Vietnam has many capable scientists who can make a significant contribution to Vietnam's efforts to improve the living conditions of its 58 million people." She adds, however, that "scientists are seriously restricted in what they can do because they are isolated from the larger scientific community and often lack the facilities, necessary equipment and supplies to carry out their work."

MCC can help provide some of these needs in terms of equipment and supplies, but more importantly, can serve as a link to the larger scientific community.

When Dr. Duong and Dr. Tuan visited Bangladesh, they were able to talk with scientists in their fields in both Bangladesh and Bangkok.

## Interim pastor needed

**First Mennonite**, Mountain Lake, Minn.

Starting time: prefer **Sept. 1, 1984**, but will consider.

Send resume to:
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Route 2
Box 260
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## 25th anniversary

**Akron Mennonite Church** will celebrate its 25th anniversary **Sept. 15-16.** The weekend activities will include music, sharing by former pastors, reflections from former and long-term members and an ice cream social. Don Jacobs is the keynote speaker. All former members are invited and urged to attend. Write to your friends or the Akron Mennnonite Church office, Box 208, Akron, PA 17501-0208, which will coordinate housing.

## Camp coordinator wanted

Responsibilities include coordinating the camping program of the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan. Includes working with three resident camps and a wilderness camping program. Program development and camp promotion are major responsibilities.

Send letter of application, resume or request for further information to:
Richard Krahn
Route 2
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J5.

Applications taken until **July 15, 1984.**

**Columbia Bible Institute,** Clearbrook, B.C., graduated 48 students on April 19 from its two-year program in biblical studies. Ray Bystrom, co-pastor of the Killarney Park Mennonite Brethren Church in Vancouver, spoke on the theme "God Has a Market for Cracked Pots" (2 Corinthians 4:7). On April 29 Elim Bible Institute, Altona, Man., graduated 20 students. Menno Wiebe, director of Native Concerns with Mennonite Central Committee Canada, based his message on 1 Peter 1:3-5.

**Parliamentarians for World Order,** which now has 600 members from the legislatures of 31 countries, has introduced a motion in numerous countries that calls for (1) a freeze on the development of nuclear weapons and (2) a comprehensive disarmament treaty that would include: (a) disarmament by all nations to the level of arms required for internal security, (b) an international inspection organization to monitor violations, (c) an individually recruited world police force, (d) a stronger system of world courts and (e) a fund whereby the money saved through disarmament could become available to alleviate Third World needs.

**British society is becoming "steeped in booze"** and the Christian church must take the lead in promoting an alcohol-free lifestyle. This challenge was given to an ecumenical conference on alcoholism held in London. More than 100 delegates from 14 different bodies were told that Christianity had to wake up from its slumbers on the alcohol problem.

# Canadian farmers check on Food Bank grain distribution

Winnipeg (MCCC)—Canadian farmers donated 22,590 tonnes of grain to developing countries through the Mennonite Central Committee Canada Food Bank last year. But did the grain actually get to the hungry?

The answer, according to a group of farmers from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba who toured India and Bangladesh on behalf of Food Bank, is yes. "Grain shipped through the Food Bank gets to the needy," says Harold Penner, a tour participant from Arnaud, Man.

The Feb. 28 to March 20 tour gave the 12 farmers a chance to see what happened to over 8,000 tonnes of wheat donated to India in 1983. They visited Food For Work sites in India where people receive wheat as payment for road, school, reservoir and well construction. Wheat donated by farmers created more than 2 million days of work for people in 10 states.

"We have to be honest and admit that some of the wheat is siphoned off," says Penner. "But, by and large, the MCC shipments get to their destinations intact." Tour members indicated that the loss of a small portion of wheat will not deter them from giving in the future.

The tour members are just a few of the 2,500 prairie, Ontario and British Columbia farmers who regularly contribute grain to the Food Bank, which sends grain to needy areas of the world. Storage, handling and shipping of the grain is arranged by the Canadian Food Grains Bank, an interdenominational food relief agency owned by MCC Canada, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the United Church of Canada, the Baptist Federation of Canada, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Christian Reformed Relief Committee of Canada and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Each $1 donation of grain receives a grant of $3 from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The 22,590 tonnes of grain donated by farmers last year to the Food Bank was sent to El Salvador, Mozambique, Kampuchea, Mauritania and India. Total value of the shipments was over $6 million.

Tour members were impressed by the caliber and spiritual commitment of the workers in the distribution of wheat and by the impact the wheat had on the recipients. "One supervisor told me that what we give 'makes a world of difference here in India,' " says Valentine Peters of Boissevain, Man. "We saw how our wheat gave people jobs and food." "The tour showed me that food aid can be used for more than just emergency relief," says Harold Penner. "Food can also be used as a development tool to build roads, schools, wells and reservoirs."

They were also impressed by the poverty that they saw. "After I saw how poor those people really are I know why I should give," says Susan Rempel of Gretna, Man. "I had a picture of poverty in my mind, but I never really imagined how bad it could be."

All members of the tour agree that the visit had helped them to understand what happens to grain which they give to the Food Bank. "I'm better able to encourage others to donate grain to the Food Bank," says Tony Peters of Portage la Prairie, Man.

Other tour members were Cornie Derksen and Dave Buhler of Martensville, Sask., Bill and Ruby Sawatsky of Herschel, Sask., Larry and Linda Pauls of Linden, Alta., Frieda Friesen of Headingly, Man., George Peters of Boissevain and Food Bank director Arthur Driedger of Winnipeg.

## *Zehr named secretary of mission communications*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Jeannie Zehr of Fort Wayne, Ind., has accepted an invitation from the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission to serve as its secretary of mission communications for a three-year term beginning January 1985.

Currently editor of *Window to Mission*, the quarterly publication of the conference's Women in Mission, Zehr also serves as director of Maplewood Nursery School in Fort Wayne. She has been employed as a librarian in Moundridge, Kan., and as an elementary school teacher in Berne and Elkhart, Ind. She will succeed Meribeth Sprunger Kraybill in the COM post.

*Zehr*

Zehr is a graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) College, where she received a bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1959. She has had further training in writing, journalism and church leadership and has served as speaker at numerous women's retreats throughout the General Conference.

As secretary of mission communications, Zehr will coordinate all mission communications for COM within Canada and the United States, including scheduling of missionary itineration and preparation of the *Overseas Prayer Directory*.

Jeannie is married to Marvin Zehr, pastor of the Maplewood Mennonite Church in Fort Wayne. The Zehrs have two children, Mark (age 21) and Karen (18).

**Church Women United** has issued a call to women of faith around the world to join them in a giant witness for peace as they convene their 1984 ecumenical assembly July 19-23 at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind. Theme for the assembly is "Come! Build a New Earth: Pieces to Peace." To register write Church Women United Assembly Office, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 812, New York, NY 10115.

**Some 300 voices** joined in song at the Mennonite Educational Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., on April 29 for Mennonite Choir Festival '84, a musical event sponsored by the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools. Held only once every four years, the festival brought together choirs from eight Mennonite schools across Canada for a weekend of intense rehearsal, climaxing with a public concert. Guest conductor was Mary K. Oyer, professor of music and related arts at Goshen (Ind.) College.

**"Storytelling"** was the theme of this 's spring missionary retreat, held April 6-8 in Chang Hua, Taiwan. Sheldon Sawatzky was the featured speaker, focusing his talk on the parables of Jesus. Each person was encouraged to write a story previous to the retreat. The stories were read to the entire group at mealtimes. Because so many people participated, an additional story reading time was scheduled on Saturday evening so that everyone's contribution could be heard.

# Rural meets urban through MCC U.S. grocery sharing project

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Raul Valencia's New York apartment has only two rooms. The floors are a patchwork of cracked linoleum; the beds have no sheets.

And, until John Bauman of the Glad Tidings Mennonite Church in the Bronx arrived, the refrigerator held only a dozen eggs, a box of cheese and a pumpkin.

Bauman brought with him a bag of food donated and assembled by Amish Mennonite churches in Lancaster County, Pa., and distributed through the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. grocery sharing project.

MCC U.S. began the project in 1982 on a four-month trial basis. Since then some 15,000 bags of nutritious food have been distributed to needy people in urban centers. "This grocery sharing project not only helps alleviate the needs of people who must decide between food and fuel, but also strengthens bonds between urban and rural churches and encourages sharing," says H. A. Penner, U.S. Program director.

In the most recent activity this March, four Amish Mennonite Conference churches in Pennsylvania gathered food and assembled 500 grocery bags. Menno Fisher, conference representative for the project, observed, "When one is hungry for food, it's hard to satisfy spiritual hunger." As in past grocery sharing projects, MCC U.S. provided bags imprinted with the MCC logo, cans of beef and recipes printed in English and Spanish to include with the groceries. An MCC driver and truck were also responsible for moving the filled bags to MCC's Material Aid Center in Ephrata, Pa., and then the E. K. Martin & Sons egg distribution company transported the bags to their final destination.

Youth groups from the four churches got together at a local warehouse to fill the bags with flour, cornmeal, rice, beans and other staple foods.

*Youth from four Amish Mennonite Conference churches met March 1 to assemble bags of groceries for the poor in urban centers. Pictured are, from left, Myron Stoltzfus, Leonard Miller and Floyd Stoltzfus.*

The bags were distributed in March to needy families in New York City and Philadelphia through those cities' Mennonite councils and churches and Christian centers in the two locations.

The Amish Mennonite conference campaign is one of many grocery sharing projects planned by churches in 1984. In eastern Pennsylvania the Weaverland Conference, Lancaster and the Brethren in Christ churches plan similar drives.


## Job opening

**A resident camp director** is required for Camp Moose Lake, 140 miles southeast of Winnipeg. Major responsibilities will be in the areas of management, promotions and maintenance.

Opening effective **Sept. 1, 1984.**

For more information contact:
Camps with Meaning
1483 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C9
Phone (204) 475-3550.

**After three years of crop failures,** several farm families in the Riverton area north of Winnipeg were facing bankruptcy. Could Manitoba Mennonites do anything to help them? Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba sent an appeal to the churches. Over $90,000 in cash and seed grain was donated in a few weeks and distributed to 35 of the neediest farmers. It had been hoped that the provincial government would match the dollars contributed by Mennonites, but the response was negative.

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## Campus pastor and church relations director

**Bluffton College,** Bluffton, Ohio, invites applications for the position of campus pastor and director of church relations, available Aug. 15, 1984.

Responsible for (1) coordinating religious activities on campus and strengthening the spiritual life of students, faculty and staff, and (2) maintaining and strengthening relationships with constituent churches in the Central and Eastern Districts and with students' home churches. Will be expected to travel, preach, counsel, assist in soliciting financial support, adivse student groups and provide pastoral care for campus community.

Send application, resume and credentials to:
Elmer Neufeld, president
Bluffton College
Bluffton, OH 45817.


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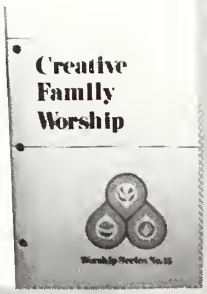
# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Biblical and Mennonite Resources for Worship

The Commission on Education has developed the Worship Series to help pastors and other congregational leaders understand the theological basis of worship practices in the believers' church tradition. These booklets give creative and practical suggestions for planning various types of services. Several booklets help congregations use *The Mennonite Hymnal* more effectively. All booklets emphasize the importance of Scripture and the centrality of Christ in worship. Each booklet costs 2.95 (3.75 Can.), except where noted, and is available from Faith and Life Press, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

*Creative Family Worship* by Palmer and Ardys Becker is the newest booklet in the Worship Series. The authors show how the elements that contribute to a healthy, well-balanced congregation—fellowship, worship, study, and service—also apply to the Christian family.




## Does Your Church Have These Resources?

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- # 2 *Planning Congregational Worship*
- # 3 *Baptism and Church Membership*
- # 4 *The Celebration of the Lord's Supper*
- # 5 *Funerals and Funeral Planning*
- # 6 *Celebrating Christian Marriage*
- # 7a *Exploring the Mennonite Hymnal: Essays* (5.95 U.S., 7.50 CAN)
- # 7b *Handbook* (12.95 U.S., 16.25 CAN)
- # 7c *Hymn Singing*
- # 8 *Church Music and Worship Among the Mennonites*
- # 9 *Prayer in Corporate Worship*
- #10 *Worship in Youth and Children's Groups*
- #11 *Involving Children and Youth in Worship*
- #12 *Worship Resources*
- #13 *Ordination, Licensing, and Installation*
- #14 *Visual Arts in Worship*

## COE Calendar

Mennonite Marriage Encounter Schedule
*1984*
10/5-7 Laurelville, PA;
10/19-21 Federal Way, WA;
10/26-28 Lima, OH.
11/16-18 Spruce Lake, PA.
*1985*
1/11-13 Peoria, IL;
2/15-17 Concordia, KS;
2/22-24 Salem, OR;
3/9-11 Marshall, MN;
3/15-17 South Bend, IN;
3/22-24 London, Ont.;
4/19-21 Spruce Lake, PA

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

## deaths

*Paul Erb*, longtime Mennonite Church worker, died in Scottdale, Pa., on May 7 at the age of 90. Born in Newton, Kan., on April 26, 1894, he taught at Goshen (Ind.) College and served as editor of *Gospel Herald* from 1944-1962. He wrote a number of books and served on many churchwide committees. He is survived by his wife, Alta, and daughter Winnifred Paul of Scottdale and son Delbert of Argentina.

## workers

*Irene Baergen*, First Church, Edmonton, has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with Mennonite Central Committee as a secretary at the Youth Orientation Unit in Warburg, Alta. Her parents are Agnes Regehr and the late David Regehr.

*Donald* and *Kathryn Froese*, Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, are beginning three-year assignments with MCC in Serenje, Zambia. He will teach religious studies and she will teach music at the Malcolm Moffat Teacher Training Centre. He has a bachelor's degree in theology and art from Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Manitoba, both in Winnipeg. She has a bachelor's degree in theology and music from the same schools. His parents are Jacob and Irene Froese of Wheatley, Ont. Her parents are Henry and Frieda Peters of Hanley, Sask.

*Lila Garber*, Akron (Pa.) Church, has begun a two-year MCC assignment as assistant store manager at the Ephrata (Pa.) SELFHELP store. She studied at Millersville (Pa.) University.

*Dwight Goering* has been hired as half-time community youth worker by the Associated Churches of Moundridge, Kan., beginning June 1. ACM is made up of Eden Mennonite, First Mennonite, Hopefield Mennonite, United Methodist and West Zion Mennonite churches. A high school teacher and coach in Moundridge for eight years, Goering will continue in that capacity half time.

*Wilson* and *Edith Hunsberger*, Rockway Church, Kitchener, Ont., are beginning a three-year MCC assignment in rural development in Calcutta, India. Wilson, who served with MCC in Poland from 1946-48, has degrees from Waterloo (Ont.) College and the University of Toronto. Edith's parents are Edwin and Ruth Byer.

*Baergen*

*Goering*

*Froeses*

*Jantzens*

*Jim* and *Susan Jantzen*, Jubilee Church, North Newton, Kan., are beginning a three-year MCC assignment in water resources and teaching in Mongo, Chad. Jim and Susan each have a bachelor's degree from Bethel College, North Newton. His parents are Lubin and Tillie Jantzen of Newton, Kan. Her parents are Henry and Meribeth Claassen of Wichita, Kan.

*Lawrence* and *La Verna Klippenstein*, Home Street Church, Winnipeg, are beginning a two-year MCC assignment in research and writing on East-West relations at Keston College in London, England. Lawrence, who has a doctorate from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, has worked as a historian and archivist for the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg. LaVerna, who has a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College, previously served in Native Ministries in Matheson Island, Man. He is the son of Susan Klippenstein of Altona, Man. She is the daughter of Mrs. Peter D. Reimer of Steinbach, Man.

*Klippensteins*

*Elmer Neufeld* has been reappointed president of Bluffton (Ohio) College for his third three-year term.

## ministers

*Ruth Buxman* was installed as pastor at Haight-Ashbury Fellowship, San Francisco, May 6. She had served as interim pastor since Dec. 1, 1983. She has a Master of Divinity degree from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Calif., and served a two-year nursing assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in Haiti.

*Eugene Klassen*, pastor at Emmanuel Church, Clearbrook, B.C., has resigned effective Aug. 15.

*Weldon Nisly* will become pastor at Cincinnati Fellowship beginning Aug. 1. He has a master's degree in peace studies from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

*Bruno Penner* will become pastor at Bethel Church, Fortuna, Mo., in August. He previously served at Meadows (Ill.) Church and First Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

*Galen Penner*, pastor at Tiskilwa (Ill.) Church, was ordained June 3 after serving at the church for one year. He is a graduate of AMBS.

*Ann Showalter, Pauline Kennel* and *Norma Goertzen* were each ordained May 27 at First Church, Oak Park, Ill., for specialized ministries. Showalter is chaplain at a youth home, Kennel is coordinator of Chicago Area Mennonites, and Goertzen is a librarian and teaches at North Park Theological Seminary.

*Bill Stucky* will become the first full-time pastor at Fort Collins (Colo.) Fellowship, beginning Nov. 1. He and his wife, Marjorie, have served as directors of Camp Mennoscah, Murdock, Kan., for the past 10 years.

*Tom Voth*, pastor at St. Louis Fellowship, was ordained May 20.

## A caring people

**The Hutterites: To Care and Not to Care**, *a Buller film produced and photographed by Burton Buller, written and narrated by John L. Ruth*

*Reviewed by Bernie Wiebe, editor*

When the first 400 Hutterites arrived in the United States from Russia in 1874, they settled in South Dakota on the banks of the Missouri River. Today's descendants of Jakob Hutter (a hatmaker)

number about 30,000 in 300 colonies in the United States and Canada.

Burton Buller and John L. Ruth, well-known collaborators for Mennonite media productions, visited 18 of these colonies and have put together a 58-minute film documentation of life among these communal people.

*The Hutterites: To Care and Not to Care* is an unusually intriguing film. Ruth is hardly noticeable in his narrations. The film is a fascinating collage of actual living scenes from 15 of those colonies (three refused permission to film).

There is singing that will linger long in the listener's mind. The long drawn-out singing for worship is still there. But the beautifully melodic a capella singing at youth programs and while at work seems to have become a vital part of their community life.

Issues of leaving the colony or staying, going and returning, seeking marriage partners, reading sermons, never owning anything privately, all are openly spoken to. There is a confidence within the people which is captured by the camera.

The movie has its flaws. It is a collage that seems to make all Hutterites one people. Distinctives among the *Darius-*, *Schmiede-* and *Lehrer-leut* are not revealed. To me the title reflects a misconception of the people. It says that to become a caring people you must learn not to care for yourself. That seems contrary to the First and Second Commandments of Jesus (Mark 12:29-31) and contradicts the obvious self-esteem reflected by the Hutterites in the movie. While the film covers a wide range of colony life and does it with unabashed candor, some credibility could have been added by showing a couple of problem scenes or at least referring to them. It is too idyllic.

*The Hutterites* is the finest documentary look at Hutterite life from the inside that has been produced to date. Ruth and Buller deserve sincere credit for a creative approach to narration which is unobtrusive and to filming that speaks powerfully by itself.

## Baseball magic

**The Natural**, *a Tri-Star film directed by Barry Levinson, screenplay by Roger Towne and Phil Dusenberry*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, editorial assistant*

From the moment lightning strikes the tree under which Roy Hobbs' father died and the boy forges a baseball bat from its wood and names it "wonderboy" we know that *The Natural* is not your regular baseball story. Hobbs (Robert Redford), the golden boy hero of this Americanna fairy tale, marches toward stardom but is felled by an angel of death dressed (of course) in black.

The bulk of the story follows 16 years later as Hobbs returns to baseball with the New York Knights, carrying his magical bat, like the Excalibur of Arthurian legend. Almost singlehandedly, he raises the last-place Knights to contention for the pennant. Then he meets Memo Paris (Kim Basinger), a second angel of death (also wearing black), and his fortunes plummet until he is rescued by his childhood sweetheart (Glenn Close), a glowing white presence in the stadium when he emerges from his slump.

The mythic elements of good versus evil are clear simply from the telling, but Levinson makes it obvious by bathing his hero and heroine in golden light and shading his evil characters in semidarkness. The gods are at work in the skies as lightning flashes and thunder rolls at climactic moments. He also uses (overuses, I would say) slow motion to tell us when something dramatic is happening.

The 1952 novel by Bernard Malamud on which this movie is based also presents this mythical atmosphere, but with a different tone, greater subtlety and a more downbeat ending. But most who see the film will not have read the book and would not want to see the book's ending on the screen.

*The Natural* has symbols galore—from a silver bullet to a broken clock—and depth. Much is going on, more than a simple story, yet it may try to do too much, since everything doesn't tie together neatly. For example, Roy Hobbs tells the two evil women he meets that his goal is to be considered the best baseball player ever. Each of them replies,

"Is that all?" A good question. But it's left there, not fully addressed.

The costuming (it is set in 1939) and the music by Randy Newman are superb, as is the acting and stunning cinematography by Caleb Deschanel. And though the fairy tale qualities are overdone, one can't help but cheer along.


### Pastor wanted

**Manhattan Mennonite Fellowship** seeks a full-time, experienced pastor. MMF is a young congregation affiliated with the Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren and General Conference. University community.

Contact:
Dwayne Schrag
346 Twykingham
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# partners

"... Without the support they have found at House of Friendship, such as counsel, child care, free French classes, furniture, and yes, a quiet weekend at a camp, their stable family life might have crumbled under the strain."
—report on a poverty grant recipient in Montreal

"I just saw your advertisement on television and I'm sitting down to write this letter. I believe it is our duty to spread thoughts of peace and love . . . I am eighteen. I want to help! Please write me and tell me more about your organization . . ."
—a TV viewer

"... my vision is to form a Mennonite congregation in Houston, made up of Taiwanese people and Chinese people from all backgrounds . . . to preach the gospel, help the needy, teach the way of Christ, make peace . . ."
—a Chinese Mennonite pasto

"The possibilities for Bacavi are exciting. The construction of the racquetball courts, playground and development of picnic areas . . . will help the MVS unit in its effort to give youth and adults an alternative to substance abuse and to improve the overall quality of life . . ."
—an MVS worker to a Hopi village in Arizona

"It is exciting to be involved in the birth of a new church, a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. We have sensed the Spirit's leading over the last nine months of Bible study, prayer and dreaming. We know it is Christ who is joining us together."
—a church planter

## North American partners in mission—

**Yes—I'll join the partnership.**

Name _____

Address _____

Congregation _____

My partnership gift is enclosed $ _____

**Commission on Home Ministries**
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0

## Care to buy a cookbook?

We enjoy reading *The Mennonite*. The editorials alone are worth its cost.

In the Feb. 14 issue (p. 82) was a full page ad on *The Festival Cookbook*. I never saw an ad like that before but there is always a first for everything. What surprised me and others and was somewhat disgusting is that it went on and on and no price was ever mentioned.

I am cookbook conscious because another woman and I at Freeman edited a cookbook. It came off the press just before last Christmas. I'm wondering if we could have something in *The Mennonite* about ours.

We printed 1,500 books and sold over half in less than three months. The last half will go much slower. With this project we would like to do something worthwhile for our Women in Mission at Bethany Church.

*The Bethany Mennonite Cookbook* has 1,300 recipes on 384 pages. It has Low German, Hutterisch and Swiss German recipes. Included are crockpot, microwave and diet hints. Cost is $8.50 (U.S.) postpaid. *Elizabeth Walter, Route 1, Box 102, Freeman, SD 57029*

March 2

*Editor's note: Sorry to be so slow in printing your letter. I wasn't sure whether we should try to sell you a full-page ad (which costs $340) but decided that was not your wish. If you want more space, you'll have to buy the ad as they did for* The Festival Cookbook.

## Urge emphasis on city

We Mennonites, gathered in Chicago for the Urban Congress (April 25-28), do hereby urge the editors of our Mennonite periodicals to place a much higher priority on articles concerning the city. *Hubert Schwartzentruber, B. Willms, E. Stanley Bohn, John J. Smucker, Gary E. Martin, Betty Hochstetler, Daniel P. Schrock, Sally Schreiner, Richard Friesen, Jose M. Artiz, Samuel Hernandez, Richard Martin King, Lee A. Lowery, P. H. Broaddus, Jr., Ferdinand Vazquez, Iris A. Rose, Irene Yoder Smucker, Pauline Kennel, Elias Acosta, Jim Bair, David W. Shenk, Willard Fenton Miller, Hugo Neufeld, Diane E. Suit*

May 15

## Suffering is an alone thing

The Feb. 28 issue arrived April 24. We read the editorial aloud ("Death Exploded My Hopes"). Ten thousand miles from where you wrote that piece there is also pain in its various forms affecting people as it will. But pain is always an individual thing. Suffering is an alone thing. May God give us all special ways to touch individuals in their time of need. Strength to you as you write again. *Jake Buhler, MCC country director, Thailand, and Louise Buhler, MCC country director, Vietnam, 120 (222) Soi Pramote 2, Silom Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand*

May 22

## Schmidts are busy

We have just returned from an eight-week tour of ministry, involving services of varied kinds from Oklahoma to Montana. The blessings of the Lord have been rich upon us. We praise him for these opportunities that have opened and for the privilege of serving in this way. *Norman J. Schmidt, Box 156, Quakertown, PA 18951*

May 22

*Editor's note: Norman and Janis Schmidt are serving as itinerant workers in evangelism, marriage enrichment, Bible studies and other special services during this year. Let us remember them in prayer as they serve in many parts of our conference.*

## Scholarship and ministry

I respond to your editorial in the April 24 issue in which you reflect on the articles which went to make up the Mennonite Biblical Seminary issue.

You see two things which the articles seem to bring out: (a) positively, that our "scholarship" at AMBS provides avenues to integrate reflection with praxis, (b) negatively, that goals for clergy formation are not clear enough.

For what our scholarship has been able to help, by way of solid biblical studies and a conscious endeavor to have students work at the integration of theology and praxis, we are grateful. We know full well that that does not just happen. Over the past several years as faculty we have given attention to the consideration of solid exegesis which touches everyday life. For that reason also we are giving attention to spiritual formation, trying to help one another to grow spiritually with a sense of responsibility one to another.

On the second item, I share your concern for helping students in the best possible way to transfer from the classroom to the local congregation. I underscore your final comment and would welcome the help which conferences and congregations can give us in this regard. Let me share something of what has been happening at AMBS to try to work at this issue.

For the third year now, one component of the curriculum includes an M.Div. seminar for middler and senior students. In groups of six to nine students, together with a faculty adviser, students in the M.Div. program need to have two years of such experience during which they look at and help each other evaluate their readiness for ministry: their communication skills, their theological stance, their theological and psychological integration, their counseling skills, their identification and articulation of issues in decision making, their conflict management skills, their spiritual and psychological self-growth, their readiness to utilize resources in the congregation, their understanding of social change and awareness of self as change agent, and their general knowledge of church structure, polity and dynamics of the local congregation.

We are the first to grant that this does not guarantee the realization of goals for clergy formation, but it does mean that we are consciously working at these goals. In addition we have made arrangements to meet regularly with graduates in their first assignments, to be available for counsel and to help facilitate the transfer from the academic setting to the church setting. At those times we ask specifically: What in your years at AMBS helped and what did not help you in your responsibilities which now face you?

One final comment. The Drew model, "Integrity in Ministry Profile," with its six components, I would see as being much in keeping with our AMBS projections. We will want to work at that with proper application.

Thanks for giving me the occasion to speak our mutual concerns. *Henry Poettcker, president of Mennonite Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham, Elkhart, IN 46517*

May 23

**About letters:** *To encourage readers to express themselves on a variety of issues, we try to use all letters submitted for publication. Longer letters will be shortened. Unsigned correspondence will not be published, although we may withhold names in special situations.* Editor

# Silver Street took charge of change

*Vyron L. Schmidt*

The Silver Street Mennonite Church of rural Goshen, Ind., appeared to be in trouble. Membership and attendance had steadily declined over the previous 50 years.

Average Sunday attendance in 1980 was in the 40s, and over half of those were 65 or older. The church struggled to meet its budget, even though it had been reduced from the year before. We did not attract and hold the younger adults. Young families were driving right past our little country building to go church shopping in Goshen, five miles away.

We were struggling with change. Change seemed to affect us negatively. Our active members no longer lived in the immediate vicinity of the church, and the children had been moving away, many to nearby city churches. The few younger couples we did have were leaving, some to further schooling, some to other jobs and others to churches in Goshen. Some people wondered if we should close the doors for good and merge with some of the other Mennonite churches in the area.

**Accepting change.** Change is a fact of life. Many agree that rapid social change is one of the few constants in our world today. Society is in a state of flux and so is the church. The church tends to be a conservative institution which adopts changes more slowly than society at large but also follows basic principles of social change.

There has been a lot of work on church growth in the last decade but not enough discussion about the principles of change. I believe that change is basic to growth. If we can begin to understand social change, what helps and what hinders positive change, then that information can release church growth. *The Change Agent: The Strategy of Innovative Leadership* by Lyle Schaller has been helpful to me as a pastor; it is also easily understood by lay leaders.

**Stabilizing.** One significant change at Silver Street was a recent change in pastoral leadership. The young pastor and family had left to continue their education, and in the following year 12 more people transferred out of the church, including several young couples.

Our first task was to stabilize the situation. It is tempting for a new minister to introduce major changes in a church too soon or for lay leaders to get excited about a new idea and try to push it through too rapidly. Resistance can quickly develop and undo a potentially positive direction. It is best to introduce changes slowly, carefully and only after a thorough assessment of their advantages and disadvantages.

We began by looking at Silver Street's assets. There are many, though they tended to be overshadowed by the current negative change and a low self-image.

Every church has strengths, and these are often overlooked when going through tough times. Even apparent liabilities can be assets when seen from a proper perspective. Silver Street was genuinely friendly and open to visitors, they had an attractive informal style of worship, a high level of presonal commitment to the church, financial ability, a nice sanctuary and basic harmony in the group.

There were also some liabilities. A country location, an old building with poor restroom and nursery accommodations, a small size and too many steps in the building, but those were not liabilities for everyone. Young adults were attracted to the worship experience we were developing, and if we provided an invitation and some transportation they enjoyed the country drive, the older people and the quaint little church. Students from Goshen College were our first new attenders.

**Tackling change.** After about a year of stabilizing we began to work at change more directly. I had been suggesting that further change was possible if we were willing to pay the price and take the risk. My sermons from the Book of Acts that winter highlighted not only the excitement of change and growth but also the stresses and problems—the price. We would have to invest time and energy into incorporating new people, restructuring our ministry and eventually in taking a hard look


## Leading minister needed

Leading minister required to work with an associate pastor and youth minister in a German/English church in Winkler, Man. Preferable starting time is **July 1985.** Applicants should have the experience and education to meet the needs of a large, diverse congregation.

Please address replies to:
Abe Wiebe, church chairman
Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church
Box 944
Winkler, MB R0G 2X0
Phone (204) 325-8053.

## Camp positions

**Camp Mennoscah** positions will be open **Nov. 1, 1984.** A full-time **camp manager** is needed. Housing is provided. Responsibilities include organizing and supervising the camp grounds and buildings.

A one-third- to half-time **program director** is needed. Responsibilities include organizing and supervising summer youth camping programs.

Anyone interested should contact:
Western District Conference
Box 306
North Newton, KS 67117
**before July 15.**

## Church history teacher

The **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries** are seeking a person with primary teaching and research interest in church history, beginning **fall 1985.** Applicants should be prepared to teach in the area of general church history as well as in historical theology.

Please send applications and resumes to:
Jacob W. Elias, dean
3003 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46517.

*Our church, begun in 1892, was on the verge of closing its doors when the congregation decided to take charge of changes from here on.*

at the inadequacies of our 90-year-old building. Allowing for ongoing positive change and growth would mean a lot of work. It would not be enough to say, "We don't want to die." We had to be willing to pay the price to live. Silver Street was willing.

We began this phase by experimenting with smaller changes which we believed would strengthen our church life. We removed half the benches from the sanctuary and recentered and angled the remaining ones for more closeness in worship. Since Sunday was our main time together as a group, we reorganized our morning schedule to include a fellowship for meeting newcomers and a 90-minute worship service. This gave us more time for singing, sharing and a discussion following the sermon. Children were dismissed for Sunday school before the sermon discussion time. We moved the pulpit from the stage to the floor, started using an overhead projector for sermon notes and illustrations and started including children's stories every Sunday even though we had only three children.

All changes were made on a trial basis. They were introduced to and discussed by the congregation, tried for a while, evaluated by the congregation and then continued as is, modified or changed back. The pulpit went back on the stage.

In that second year we also began an organized study process which helped us evaluate our past and take concrete next steps for the future. We used *A New Look at Church Growth* by Floyd Bartel along with the study guide. Our elders, church chairman and church treasurer worked through this material one winter as a small group. Out of it came additional recommendations for positive change. One involved goal setting. We formed a vision commission to lead the congregation in developing one-, three- and five-year goals. In that process we changed our target group from young adults to young families and we established a congregational size goal of 250 regular worshiping members. Our old building would seat only half that many so we were now squarely on the path to some major changes.

**Reflections.** Much change has occurred in the last four years at Silver Street. We eventually filled the old church building to capacity and decided to relocate to Goshen. Attendance has more than doubled, giving has increased significantly, new people have been included in the inner life of the church, and now we look forward to our new building and expanded ministry opportunities in Goshen.

Making these changes has not been easy. A sense of loss often accompanies change, and losses must be grieved. We lost some established patterns, we lost our smallness and we eventually lost our familiar surroundings for worship. We tried to work through these losses by celebrating our 90th anniversary in October 1982 and by having a whole month of Homecoming in June 1983. This was the last month in the old building and we invited former members and friends of the church to visit us any of those Sundays to reminisce about the past, experience the present and look forward with us to the future.

My first two years at Silver Street were years of much hard work and little tangible growth. Other situations may take even longer, the crisis may not be as great as ours appeared to be, the leadership may not be as open. Change involves risk, and there is no guarantee about the outcome.

A key factor for us has been the ability and willingness of our leaders to work at the change process. Some had helpful experience with change and risk from their business backgrounds. They attended countless study, discussion and planning meetings.

Another important factor has been the willingness of the congregation to work with change. They too have been to many discussion meetings. Frequent communication with the congregation has been a priority all through this process. Many of our active members are elderly, but that hasn't kept them from grappling with and accepting change. Several have said they would rather see the church live on in a new form and in a new location than to simply see it die.

Yes, Silver Street Mennonite Church appeared to be in trouble, but that was before we decided to take charge of change.

*Copies of Vyron Schmidt's study of the decisions and problems dealt with by the congregation (a study done for Vyron's Doctor of Ministry program) are available free from the Commission on Home Ministries, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

# Is that a 'Mennonite' name?

*Kie Ho*

At a recent seminar that my company sponsored and where many of the participants came from our overseas offices, a gentleman from the Netherlands looked at my name tag and said, "I see that you are from our division in California, but your name does not sound American." I told him mine is a Chinese name but I am an American citizen.

I should have told him that my name is as American as Lucille LeSueur or Margarita Carman Cansino before they became Joan Crawford and Rita Hayworth. My name does sound as foreign as the name of the Japanese slugger, Sadaharu Oh, but does it not also sound as American as Joe DiMaggio?

In fact I have already simplified my name for Yankee ears. I was born Kie Liang Ho, which means Ho, the first-class bridge. I skip the name Liang because it is so difficult for many to pronounce. Even so, my short name has caused much confusion. Some secretaries write it as Keyhole. Others, deciding that such a last name is impossible, change it arbitrarily to something more common like Holm or Holt. (Mennonites would probably change it to Hofer.) I have learned that this can be avoided if I add that my last name is Santa Claus' "ho-ho-ho."

I had the best opportunity to change my name when I acquired my citizenship. That was an unforgettable event. I cried in my heart, knowing that at last my dream had come true. I had wanted to become an American since I was 12, when I used to spend my pocket money for sending letters requesting free tourist brochures from the states—every place from New York to San Diego. When I was sworn in as an American citizen, I could have become Keith Ho or Kenneth Ho or even Don Ho (many ask if the Hawaiian singer is my relative). I decided to keep my Chinese name. One privilege my new country has given me is the right to maintain my ethnic identity, and I cherish it.

Having a Chinese name does not necessarily mean that I am culturally Chinese. I was born in Indonesia (which a lot of people misunderstand as Indochina) and I do not write or speak Chinese. Still, when somebody in my office has a birthday and we are all signing a card, people often say, "Come on, Kie, write something in Chinese." What I write is my Dad's name, and I tell them that it means "abundance of fortune and long life." Actually my father's name means "Ho, the goldfish."

Many people are confused by Asian names and nationalities. One day my wife and I asked a patio contractor to give us a reference. He turned over page after page of his reference book and at last, with a victorious smile, he said, "Here you are, this one is a Chinese lady, Mrs. Nguyen." I hated to disappoint him by telling him that Nguyen is a Vietnamese name, and since we do not speak Vietnamese at all, her number might not be the best to call. On another occasion my son's dentist recommended an orthodontist, saying, "I think you should go to Dr. Koshi, you can communicate well with him." We thanked him for his thoughtfulness, but we suggested that Dr. Koshi must be a Japanese-American. Jokingly I told him he was not comparing apples and oranges (an American expression I like) but egg foo young and Kirin beer.

When our daughter was born, we did not give her a Chinese name. We thought that the name should be selected for the child and not for the parents' sake. We would have liked to name her May Hoa Ho, "Ho, the pretty flower," but imagine the problems she would face in school among children who like to make fun of funny names. So we gave her a common American name—Melanie. We hope that she will be as gentle as Melanie Wilkes in "Gone with the Wind." I wonder if Melanie Wilkes' mother ever knew that "Melanie" refers to something black. Would she still have named her so? Only Margaret Mitchell could tell.

So what's in a name? Benjamin Kubelsky changed his name (Jack Benny). Zbigniew Brzezinski did not. I will not.

*Does a person's name make a difference as to how you feel about him or her?*

*This article first appeared in the* Los Angeles Times *and was reprinted in the* Southwest Chinese Journal. *Kie Ho, 24671 Paige Circle, Laguna Hills, CA 92654, volunteered it to* The Mennonite.

# MEDITATION

## Leaders in matriarchal family systems

There are four Indian Mennonite congregations in Oklahoma. In the past generation the leadership in each congregation was provided by men such as Harvey Whiteshield, Willie Meeks, Dan Allrunner, Guy and John Heap of Birds, Kias and Homer Hart. Today the leadership is being provided by women.

When one looks at Luke 8:1-3 there is a striking similarity in the role of the women who traveled with Jesus and the Twelve and the role of the Indian women in the four Indian Mennonite congregations in Oklahoma. Indeed many women are providing out of their means so that the good news of the kingdom of God can be preached and taught. The congregations of Zion, Bethel, Koinonia and Seiling have several active women, but the key individuals who are giving strong leadership are four in number, one in each congregation.

The leadership in Zion is provided by **Rose Birdshead**. Rose has been a strong figure since the retirement of Lyman and Adeline Sprunger. Rose has become an able leader who helps the church fulfill its mission.

The Bethel congregation in Hammon, where Rudy and Elvina Martens now serve, was without a pastor for a number of years. Providing the major leadership during this period was **Blanche Whiteshield**, wife of Henry, a lay leader of many years. Blanche is an excellent helpmate to Henry and she exerts great influence by giving encouragement to families in the community. Blanche is a sister to the late Homer Hart.

The leader for many years at the Koinonia congregation in Clinton is **Alice Heap of Birds**. She was one of the original members of the Star Mission Club organized by Mrs. J. B. Ediger in 1939. Now in its 45th year, this organization is the pillar in the congregation. Alice, the widow of Guy Heap of Birds, has given leadership continually. Alice is one who has never spoken an unkind word to anyone or about anyone. Following Guy's death she has remained faithful to the church.

The Seiling Mennonite Church has the greatest number of women who relate to the church. Many are leaders, but the one who provides the most active leadership is **Bertha Little Coyote**. Bertha has given herself to the church for many years. One of her gifts is singing Cheyenne hymns. She is able to relate cross-culturally.

Rose Birdshead, Blanche Whiteshield, Alice Heap of Birds and Bertha Little Coyote are names not known by many in the General Conference. But they are familiar names in the work of Indian ministries of the Commission on Home Ministries and in the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council. The leadership these women provide has never been questioned. Women in the Cheyenne and Arapaho culture have exerted leadership through the years within a matriarchal family system. The leadership of these female leaders in the church is a remnant of that system.

The four women are deeply committed Christians and over many years have faithfully served their churches. Like the women who traveled with Jesus and the Twelve, they are walking the Jesus road. Their strong leadership in their respective churches makes it possible for the Good News to be preached to their Cheyenne and Arapaho people.

*Lawrence H. and Betty E. Hart*

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Many people have long assumed that missionary devotion begins across the ocean. That's where the spiritual frontiers are to be found.

Recent studies show that younger Christians are not as excited about foreign missions. Maybe they sense something that is critical for today's church. Missions is not to be relegated to a few select people overseas. All Christians are witnesses; it is not an option. The choice is whether we will gladly be God's missionary people at home and abroad *or* whether we will continue to be a guilt-laden people especially at home as we fail to claim the privilege of being missionaries.

Our prayer is that all believers might catch the freeing vision of being a missionary people.


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Most articles in this issue relate to the work of the Commision on Home Ministries. A special thanks is hereby expressed to E. Stanley Bohn, who helped to put this package together.

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# editorial

## *Missions next door*

Missions are still associated largely with fields across the ocean and with exceptional people who have had special spiritual experiences. As articles inside this issue show and as our own time tells us, when economic times get tough, we want our money to go for overseas mission. Consequently we cut back on home ministries giving.

In a way that seems appropriate. We already spend too much on ourselves, so let's give more overseas. But we don't apply that same guideline to supporting our own churches and workers. There we continue to increase our spending.

Home missions is not popular when it gets closer and closer to home. We liked it when we could send missionaries to reservations and to cities. But suddenly the city is us, and people from the reservations are our neighbors. Our mission and our neighborhood have no distinct boundaries. It makes us uncomfortable.

It is a challenge for many congregations to see themselves in mission at the places where their buildings are located and where they live, work and play. That is what Jesus asks of us in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and how he describes us (Acts 1:8). There is no option here. This is us and this is mission—globe-encircling to be sure, but beginning at home.

Our churches are still turned too inward. We are busy with non-essentials. Conferenciology, churchology, bibliology and committeeology occupy us more than compassion and witness (witness in Christ). Our missiology fails to see that Jesus was not crucified on a church altar between a Bible and a bouquet of flowers. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves on the town garbage heap. It was the kind of common place where people would speak Low German, High German, English and all the other common languages. His cross was placed where thieves gamble, prostitutes solicit and dope is pushed. Even on the cross he witnessed to familial care (John 19:26-27).

Inward-oriented churches are quick to turn to the traditions. Let us go back to basics, back to the original Anabaptism, back to the King James Bible, back to. . . . This reaction usually contains a certain amount of smugness and cowardice. It is unwilling to become "dirty" from messing around in a corrupt world. Such churches will likely refuse to confess their own shortcomings and miss the new outpouring of God's Spirit for our time.

Some inward-oriented churches resort in desperation rather quickly to almost any form of activism. They'll start project upon project and wear buttons loudly proclaiming, "We care." Do-goodism is usually so shallow that it quickly plays itself out and must be regularly replaced by new projects and fresh slogans. It rarely leads to renewal or revival.

God is a missionary God. In Christ he reaches out to the powerless as a vulnerable infant no one can readily ignore. He is a family and neighborhood God. On the cross he meets and conquers the stubborn and the toughest of the tough. When they don't repent, he asks the Father to forgive them. With the resurrection he shows us a glimpse of the global kingdom to come in his power.

A story about Lottie Lehman, world-renowned soprano, and Bruno Walter, the great German conductor, tells of Walter attending a Lehman concert. She is anxious to find out what he thought of her singing. Reluctantly, he tells her, "I heard a performance . . . the like of which I never wish to hear again. You were not your real self. Yours was a mediocre performance. Please remember that every time you stand up to sing, you must live again."

Lottie Lehman called this the turning point in her career.

That is the first challenge to all Christians. Every day and everywhere we must learn to live again, we must show Jesus Christ to ourselves, our families, our neighbors, our fellow workers and to the world.

We are the people of a missionary God who loves the whole world. There is a quality of new life in us that wants out. Holding it back may feel immediately comfortable but inevitably leads to guilt feelings which build up quickly and deeply.

Most Christians feel guilty. We have suppressed God's Spirit within and created this guilt. It can be dealt with. We can trade guilt for joy. Be a missionary people. Quit resorting to the defense mechanism of praying only for missionaries overseas. Begin your prayer by seeking faithfulness to those next door. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:14 JULY 3, 1984

## Inside this issue

- New Mennonites
- They help us see who we are
- Their testimonies

. . . like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).

# New Mennonites

*Floyd G. Bartel*

For several hundred years church growth in Mennonite churches has come almost entirely through the baptism of children whose parents were Mennonites. After the early decades of vigorous evangelistic activity the Anabaptist movement was scattered by persecution and driven to places of refuge and toleration. Only in the last 100 years have we again ventured into mission and evangelistic work.

That we must ask ourselves how new Mennonites affect our established churches suggests that this is a relatively new experience for us, or a rare experience, or one about which we have some misgivings.

New believers are God's gift to the church. Their coming may bring changes, but they are God's gift to the church. From the beginning (Acts 2:47) we are told it is the Lord who adds new believers to his church. New believers are evidence of God at work in the lives of people coming to faith. They are his gift to the church for a number of reasons.

**1. They usually come with fresh enthusiasm and joy.** Their discovery of the love and forgiveness of God in their lives is exciting to them and they are still filled with the wonder of it. Old-timers tend to take the grace of God more in stride. New believers can liven up the whole church if we affirm them and rejoice with them in their rejoicing. A new enthusiasm is infectious to the whole body.

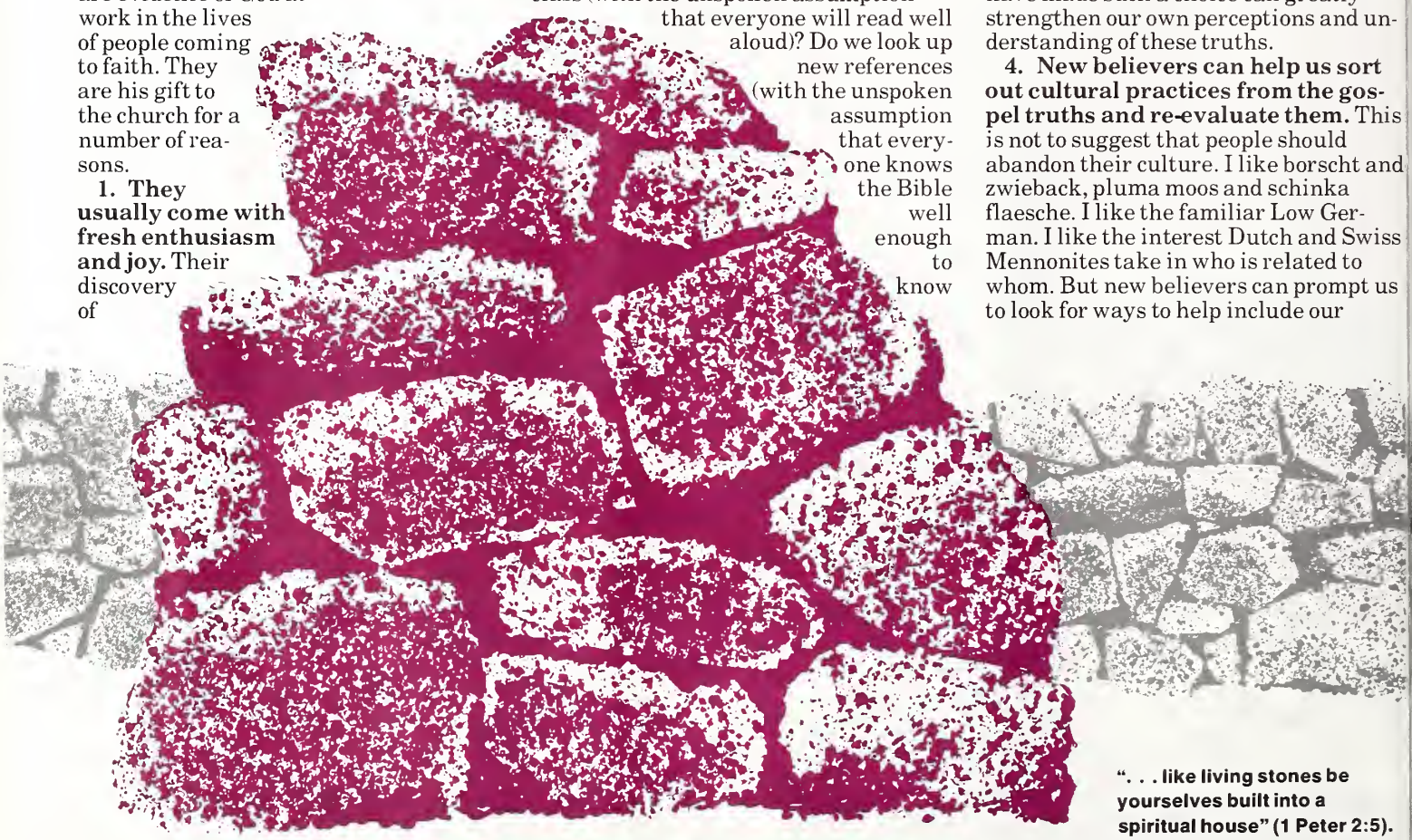
**2. They remind us that we have a wonderful gospel.** Their eagerness to learn more of what it means can be affirming and refreshing. Relating to new believers can stimulate us to improve the effectiveness of our whole teaching program in the church. Have we tried putting ourselves in the place of a newcomer in our Sunday school class? What are the assumptions by which we function? We may not have looked at these assumptions for a long time. For example, do we follow a pattern of reading the lesson text verse by verse around the class (with the unspoken assumption that everyone will read well aloud)? Do we look up new references (with the unspoken assumption that everyone knows the Bible well enough to know where to find the references quickly)?

New believers bring questions we haven't thought of and perspectives we haven't heard. They may not always ask their questions aloud, but they have them in their minds and hearts. Our first task may be to communicate an openness and willingness to hear that encourages them to articulate whatever they are wondering about without being made to feel stupid.

Our commitment to teach and learn together will be deepened. Our ability to communicate clearly the hope that is in us will be sharpened and our ability to teach the Bible will be tested. Can we teach the whole counsel of God unapologetically and understandingly? Do we include the Christian's renunciation of violence at all levels in a world that still believes in violence at many levels?

**3. New believers joining our Mennonite churches can bring conviction that comes from receiving the gospel and embracing the Anabaptist heritage by choice.** Few of us growing up in the Mennonite church know what it is really like to choose the Anabaptist perspective of salvation and discipleship in the midst of a world that offers many options. We hardly realize the kind of choice this involves when these truths have become part of our way of thinking and believing and feeling since infancy. To receive those who have made such a choice can greatly strengthen our own perceptions and understanding of these truths.

**4. New believers can help us sort out cultural practices from the gospel truths and re-evaluate them.** This is not to suggest that people should abandon their culture. I like borscht and zwieback, pluma moos and schinka flaesche. I like the familiar Low German. I like the interest Dutch and Swiss Mennonites take in who is related to whom. But new believers can prompt us to look for ways to help include our



**". . . like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5).**

brothers and sisters. We'll need to do more explaining rather than less so they don't feel left in the dark. We'll need to learn about and appreciate a diversity of cultures. Mennonite evangelism at home has many elements of cross-cultural evangelism which we generally associate with foreign missions. The cultural identity of Dutch or Russian and Swiss Mennonites is so strong that reaching out to others feels like foreign missions, especially where they still use a different language among themselves than their neighbors do.

**5. New believers are God's gift to us in the way they strengthen evangelistic outreach of the local church.** They are the best equipped for the cross-cultural evangelism we face. Consider the story of the Antioch church in Acts 11. The Hellenist Jewish Christians were scattered by the persecution after Stephen's death, not the Hebrew Jewish Christians, who were most effective in helping the church to grow. Acts 8:4 tells us that the apostles were not scattered. Why not? They were Hebrew Jewish Christians culturally. The Hellenist Jews spoke Greek and knew the ways of the Greek culture in an urban center like Antioch. These Hellenist Jewish Christians "spoke to the Greeks also" about the Lord. And afterward the church in Antioch really began to grow.

New Mennonites are likely to be our most helpful personal evangelists if we can affirm them and encourage them in their sharing about the Lord. They are not only enthusiastic about their new-found Lord, they are culturally "at home" with non-Mennonites. And they have the most available network of friends and acquaintances who may themselves still be outside the church. In addition, they can alert us to opportunities we might otherwise not even see. For example, a long distance truck driver who joined our church has been talking to his Sunday school class about developing a ministry of Christian witness and presence at a large truck stop near our church.

**6. New believers with their new questions can also help us to see some of our blind spots.** For example, one new member came to a Mennonite church from a military background. Though he accepted non-resistance as integral to his faith response to the Lord, he also has helped some old-time Mennonite believers in that congregation to see how the way they talked about peace gave the impression that Christians who were not non-resistant were pro-war. Most Christians are not pro-war and would insist they are against war. It is unfair for us who are of a non-resistant faith to give the impression that they are pro-war.

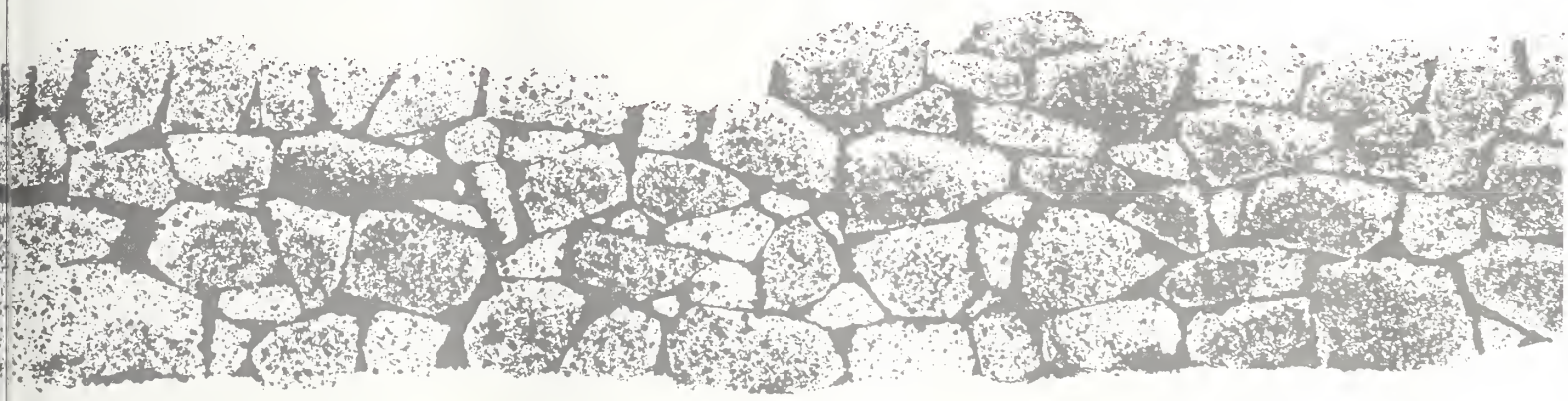
**7. New believers are God's gift to the established church when we allow the Holy Spirit to bring renewal to the whole church by the new testimony of those he is adding to the body.** Renewal begins to happen as believers—new and old—become aware of their need and open their lives to the Spirit of God for that further regenerating work which he began in us when we first believed. Paul says in Philippians 1:6 that we can be confident that "he who began a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ" (NIV). But that means being in touch with our present needs, being open to the Holy Spirit right now and giving him that opportunity to continue his renewing work in us. New believers with their new experience of the Lord's working in their lives are not to be seen as a different class of Christians. Let us rather affirm what we see the Lord doing in their lives and allow their testimony to put us more closely in touch with the Lord's continuing and active working also in our own lives.

**8. New believers are God's gift to Mennonite churches because they help us keep our identity current.** There is considerable discussion these days about our Mennonite identity. What does it mean to be a Mennonite? Won't new people cause us to lose our Anabaptist heritage? My answer to these questions is twofold.

Many Mennonites have not lost sight of their Anabaptist heritage because of new believers coming into the church. They have done so for other reasons. For the most part we lose our heritage because we choose to lose it. Some of us have chosen to exchange it for something else.

Secondly, our identity is never a static, unchanging reality. It is constantly changing. Some generations have changed it more rapidly than others. Not only do conservative minorities among us resist changes, all of us at some levels resist changes. But most of us who value our heritage want to understand, appreciate and affirm our inner identity and its meaning for our time. That inner identity is the core of beliefs rooted in the gospel by which we want to live and which we want to pass on to our children. But even that core of beliefs must be reapplied in each generation if it is to be vital and meaningful.

My observation is that new believers can help us do a more faithful job of reinterpreting and reapplying that core of beliefs for our time and our world. To do that is no easy task. It will mean that we neither impose our identity on new believers arbitrarily nor abdicate who we are in the face of questions. It will mean that our identity is never a completely settled question in all its aspects. It is always in flux. We know who we are in Christ, and still we do not yet fully see who we shall be. "Now we see as in a cloudy mirror, then we shall see face to face. Now we know in part; then we shall know fully, even as we are fully known." (1 Corinthians 13:12). •



**We neither arbitrarily impose our identity on new believers nor do we readily abdicate who we are when we have to face questions.**

**New believers are always God's gift for the growth of his church.**

**New believers can help us understand better who we are as churches and what we are doing.**

# They help us see who we are (Distinguishing faith and culture)

*Gordon Nickel*

New Mennonites enrich the faith and life of the congregations they join, say older Mennonites from around North America. "They help shake us up and make us more receptive to the Spirit's moving among us," says Arlene Koch Holdeman of Minneapolis with appreciation. "We thank the Lord for these people," adds Arno Wiebe of Denver.

We asked people in local congregations of five Mennonite conferences, "What good things are happening through people of other backgrounds coming into Mennonite churches?" Our respondents said that the new Mennonites have helped them to focus their faith, to get culture in perspective and to do the work of the church more effectively.

Edwin Friesen of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference in Steinbach, Man., says that as people of various backgrounds join his church, the term "Mennonite" is increasingly seen as "a designation of faith and less as a culture." Ed Boschman of the Laurel Glen Bible Church (Mennonite Brethren) of Bakersfield, Calif., adds that the many new Mennonites in his congregation "force us to center on and unify under common belief rather than common food or language.

Faith Mennonite Church (General Conference) in Minneapolis has been helped by its new members to "hold more dearly those central beliefs that Mennonites of all cultural backgrounds can cherish." At the same time, Faith Church and other Mennonite churches have learned to celebrate the growing diversity of culture in their midst.

Millard Osborne of the Valleyview (Old) Mennonite Church in London, Ont., finds that highlighting a single culture is neither possible nor appropriate for his congregation. "It is therefore necessary to affirm the uniqueness of each person's cultural background." He believes this has helped all members—including those with Dutch or Swiss backgrounds—to make peace with their past.

Many new Mennonites have deliberately sought out Mennonite churches because their personal study of Scripture has led them to convictions about peacemaking and daily discipleship. Arno Wiebe of the Garden Bible Church (Mennonite Brethren) in Denver says that when such people join in the life of the church, they stimulate older Mennonites to "new questioning, interest and

## One newcomer's perspective

*Mike Greenhough*

We were attracted to the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church (Kitchener, Ont.) after appreciating the solid basic values that are apparent in the Mennonite community—the honesty and integrity being testimony to a way of living.

We were welcomed, listened to, cared for, and we found new relationships. The welcome is enduring, intensive and constantly renewed. Regardless of who our pew neighbors may be, there is always a genuine query as to our well-being. Over a two-year period we have become acquainted with many people. The big problem is how to get to know all these people on a more personal level. All people should have such a pleasant problem.

Our pastors believe strongly that the story of one's path through life is an important and integral part of that person. The act of sharing this, in itself, makes one realize how rarely this happens in a lifetime. My impression is that it is a therapeutic event. The shedding, cleansing and revelation are beneficial to both the teller and the listener. We consider ourselves particularly fortunate in that our first season of Sunday school classes involved the sharing of the life stories of all participants. This was a wonderful way to get to know and understand people. A bonding happened. We know these brothers and sisters as we know few others. These things will always be with us.

There was a time that we needed help. The response was instant, unsparing, thoughtful and as correct as it was possible to be.

In terms of organization, information feedback, involvement and human relations, Stirling ranks high indeed. Among the things we appreciate are the music (with a capital M), the careful teaching/revealing of the female point of view, the great power of a united, concerted effort, the care and understanding for and with children, the breadth of issues addressed, the practicality, the appreciation of this earth and the fact that this church is not caught up in a cobweb of irrelevant issues. •

*Mike Greenhough and family attend the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont.*

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commitment."

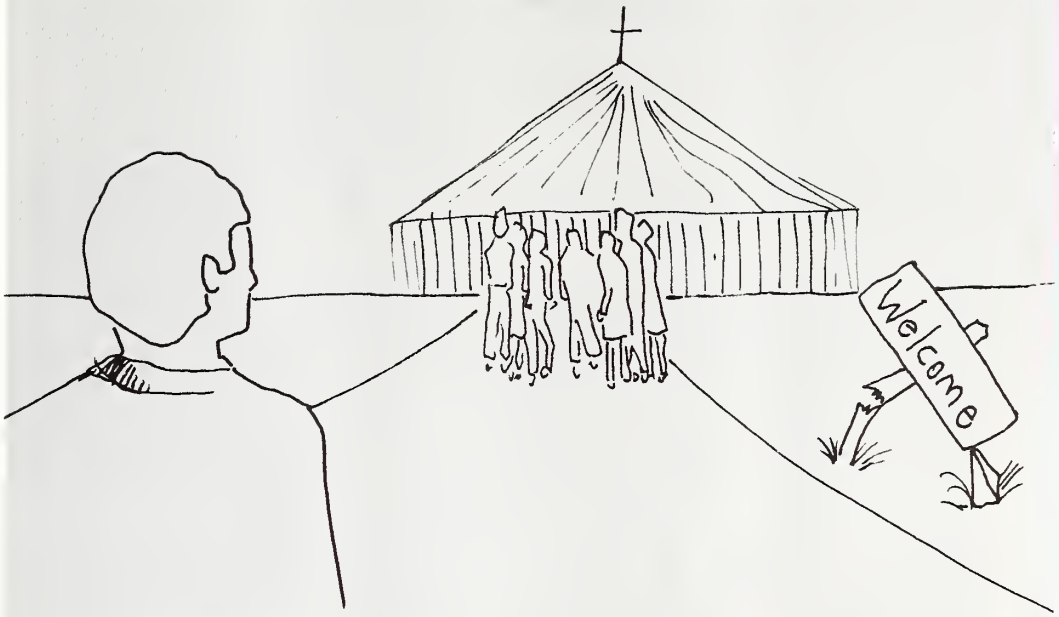
"As we 'retell' our historical/spiritual pilgrimage to new people in our church, we develop a new appreciation for it ourselves," Edwin Friesen finds. The retelling process has a purifying effect on teachings and practices, he says. "Some of these we will shed as excess cultural baggage that has accumulated over a period of time. Others will shine with fresh luster."

Ed Boschman adds that new Mennonites broaden the theological framework of the church with the variety of evangelical perspectives which they bring. "Where these deal with matters other than those not open for negotiation, it serves as enrichment and is often refreshing."

New Mennonites also have a positive impact on the life of the churches, our respondents say. The first thing they do is to open up the world of older Mennonites to include the realities of contemporary urban life. That prods older Mennonites to continue in earnest, faithful ministry to people in need, says Ed Boschman.

"Mennonites have a tremendous and distinctive grasp of biblical truth, and there are many other people who need to hear it and to see it demonstrated in life," suggests Randy McDonnold, pastor of the Westmount Evangelical Church (Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference) in Saskatoon. "But some people hesitate or feel closed out because of the way faith and ethnicity are still so closely joined in many Mennonite churches."

McDonnold, a new Mennonite himself, expects the presence of people of various backgrounds to result in an expansion of mission in Mennonite churches. "Hopefully there is an increased realization of the hunger and need for the truth among people still outside the church, an appreciation of the preciousness of the gospel as the Mennonites have received and understood it, a desire and a willingness to be open to people of other backgrounds and a willingness to reach out to them."




# It's not easy to get in

*Charlene Schmidt*

I married Larry, who already belonged to the Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church, and that is how I started going to a Mennonite church.

I battled within myself before I joined. Was it really necessary to join a church? I watched other members and really didn't see much benefit except that the church would get more money for dues because they belonged and thus bills and other expenses would be met.

I began praying about it, asking God what he wanted. As I read different scriptures, I found that we should be members in the body of Christ, praying for one another and using the gifts God gave us. I began to see a responsibility that I wasn't fulfilling, and in obedience to God's Word I joined.

I'm always greeted and spoken to, but deep down I don't think I'll ever be a Mennonite to some in my church. And I'm not sure that I want to be a Mennonite. I'm a servant of God, not of a denomination.

I'll never make zwieback, sew or quilt, for I've tried these things and deplore them. But I enjoy teaching the third grade and adult classes. I'm an usher and I enjoy greeting people. I enjoy praying for our church and its spiritual growth.

I've found that as far as being a real Mennonite is concerned, tradition becomes a bondage to some. I often praise God that this isn't a part of my life. In some areas I like the freedom that others don't seem to have.

As I think about it, I don't ever expect to be asked to fill any leadership roles in our church. I won't be able to do it in the traditional Mennonite style.

I have prayed about learning how our church works and am waiting for God to show me. I have learned and matured in a number of ways. When sickness or death comes, there is a love that flows and is overwhelming. To me it's the love of God and I yearn for more.

Some good workers and helpers are so busy giving and helping others that they neglect their own needs. I've learned from them to give of myself, but I want to remember God has given me my family and I'm responsible for them too.

Mennonites really are the quiet in the land—and reserved; they have great difficulty in speaking up. I, who am quick to react, am still learning to be silent and wait for God's leading.

In most cases I feel that Mennonites don't try to leave us out, yet unconsciously they do. Perhaps they aren't even aware when they do. *A Meetinghouse article* •

*Charlene Schmidt, Box 366, Moundridge, KS 67107, is a member of the Hoffnungsau Mennonite Church.*

At Westmount new Mennonites have served in teaching, youth ministries, music, leadership, administration and foreign missions, says McDonnold. Arlene Koch Holdeman says new members have helped make her church bold enough to sponsor refugee families and to open a self-help store.

Eventually the new Mennonites take part in providing leadership for Mennonite churches and in starting new ones. Both McDonnold and his associate pastor are of Scottish and Irish descent. Arno Wiebe says that one family who first came to know Mennonites through the Garden Park Church in Denver are now doing pastoral work in another Mennonite Brethren church. A second couple who embraced the Mennonite Brethren confession of faith at Garden Park is now working to plant a new congregation in north Denver.

"Though we naturally yearn for and cling to that which is common, it is diversity that enables the body of Christ to function properly," notes Edwin Friesen. "In fact, that is the only way it can be an expression of God to the world." *A Meetinghouse article* •

*Gordon Nickel is associate editor of the* Mennonite Brethren Herald, *159 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, MB R2L 1L4.*

# Becoming a part

*Catherine Peters*

After being part of the Mennonite church for over five years, I appreciate an opportunity to express a few feelings. I was from a non-Mennonite background and until I started dating my husband I had never even heard of Mennonites. So when he invited me to a Sunday school Christmas program I went with great curiosity.

I was surprised at the simple program and comfortable atmosphere. There was an obvious fellowship among the congregation. This appealed to me greatly since I was used to ceremony with little opportunity to know other church members. I decided right then that I wanted to continue coming.

After we became engaged and began steps toward baptism and membership in the congregation, I experienced feelings of loneliness and alienation from other church members. The minister assured me that once I became a member they would welcome me with open arms. I wondered, and as time went by I became more miserable. My husband urged me to join committees, but I was too shy to offer and no one asked.

I am happy I had the sense to pray about my problem, because God did answer.

But there are still times when I find myself asking the Lord to give me strength to smile at people who insist on calling me by my husband's name, or worse, acknowledge my husband but not me. How often I've wanted to wear a name tag just so they would call me by *my* name. I wonder how many present as well as past members have left because they felt lonely and left out.

Often I have felt that women are treated like that old saying, "Be seen and not heard." I've often wondered why there are never any women giving Sunday messages at our church and why they don't have more important responsibilities.

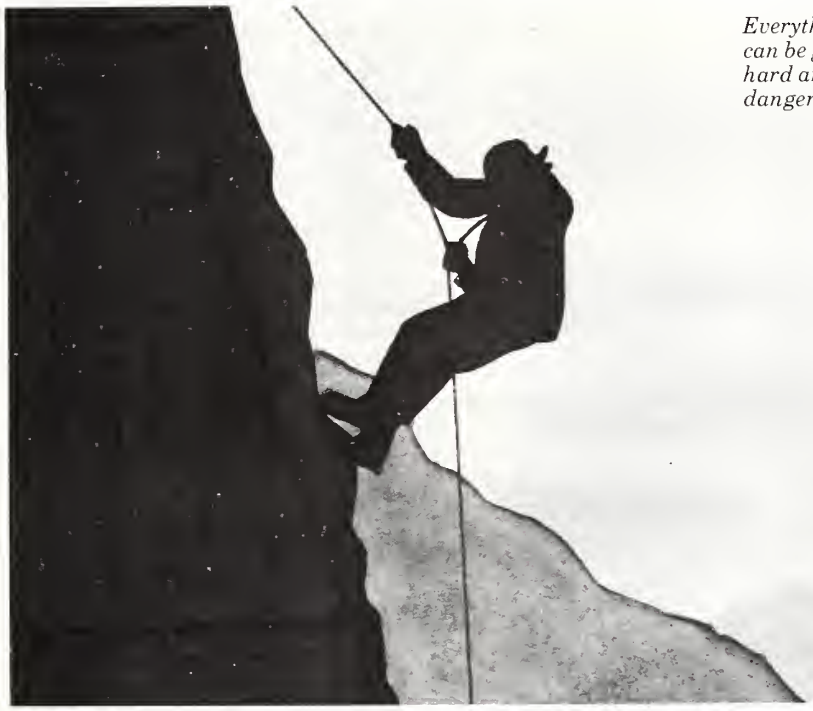
I ask the Lord for strength to deal with those people who insist I'm not a real Mennonite because I'm from a different background. How can I make them understand that it is first and foremost a religion?

Despite these difficulties, I enjoy being a part of the Gospel Mennonite Church (EMMC), where God and the family are most important. *A Meetinghouse article* •

*Catherine Peters is a member of the Gospel Mennonite Church (EMMC) of Winnipeg.*

# Wisdom: a matter of discipline

*Ted VanderEnde*



*Everything precious can be gained only by hard and even dangerous labor.*

Job 28 recites a wisdom poem in which the author wonders how to obtain wisdom. "Where then does wisdom come from? Where does understanding dwell?" he asks (28:20). He has already observed that everything precious can be gained only by hard and even dangerous labor. Man tunnels through rock in order to find gold, silver, iron and precious stones. Treasures never come cheap. But how does a person get wisdom? It is obvious that its worth is far beyond rubies and gold. No coral or topaz is able to buy it. Beyond this financial barrier stands the barrier of the other worldliness of wisdom. "It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing" (v. 21). Wisdom, in the final analysis, is obtainable only from God, who "understands the way of wisdom and alone knows where it dwells."

We already learned that the fear of the Lord opens the mine from which wisdom can be dug (v. 28). The text also implies that even when wisdom is a gift from God it cannot come cheap. Another key concept of wisdom says that the naive only become wise through discipline. The Proverbs are given for a purpose—to obtain wisdom and understanding and a meaningful life. The method to reach that goal is discipline and understanding.

Two words for discipline are used in the introduction to Proverbs (1:1-7). The first is "musar." It is the discipline of testing with a purpose. An illustration of this meaning can be seen in Deuteronomy 8:1-5. God disciplines Israel in the wilderness to teach them that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Musar involves hardship, putting a subject under stress and duress in order to teach a valuable lesson. It is the loving discipline of a father, not afraid to put son or daughter to a test in order to prove them and make them stronger. It is the discipline needed to oppose sin.

In Hebrews the Proverbs are quoted to instruct us in this battle: "In your struggle against sin, you have not resisted to the point of shedding blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as children (quoting from Proverbs now), 'My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you. Because the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as sons. Endure hardship as discipline: God is treating you as sons. . . . God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it' " (12:4-11). Ultimately it is this discipline that God the Father assigned his own Son to endure to obtain salvation, for by his chastisement ("musar") we received peace (Isaiah 53).

Wisdom, then, is acquired through accepting hardship and discipline. It is difficult to keep our passions under control, and it takes guts and pain to learn skill to govern one's life. The demise of Christian disciplines is obvious in our religious scene, where spirituality is flaunted by some as instantaneously received. Not so according to wisdom. It is a process of growth which takes time and effort, a job never fully finished, for also the "wise must add to their learning" (Proverbs 1:5).

The second term for discipline in Proverbs 1:1-6 is "bin," a Hebrew word which means between. Wisdom leads to the ability to discern between good and evil. This ability is a great goal for the young to obtain. "The naive, the untrained, believes everything" (Proverbs 14:15). What they need to learn is the reality of evil. This process involves training. In contrast to our day, the young prince or princess in the court needed first to assimilate the wisdom of the past. What the wise knew to be true and good was to be learned before the young man or woman could truly participate in ruling the nation. Hebrews says: "Solid food is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil" (6:14). That is the desire of the father and mother who teach their child the basics of wisdom: "My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them. . ." (Proverbs 1:10). It is the trait of the wise to discern, but the wicked lack this ability. Their heart is governed by evil. "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. And to shun evil is understanding" (Job 28:28). *Fourth in a series on wisdom*

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# Some smugness but willing to grow

*Joan Schmidt*

In July of 1963 I came in contact for the first time with a Mennonite. Until that point my only experience with Mennonites had been through various newspaper articles and passing their slow-moving vehicles on the roads of Waterloo County in Ontario.

My impression was that they were a peaceful and peace-seeking people who avoided politics, formal education and modern conveniences. I believed they had perhaps more answers to what it meant to truly live their faith, as shown by their caring, close communities.

I got a slight shock when I learned that the university student with the red Volkswagon, whom I had been dating, was a Mennonite. It was a pleasant surprise to discover our faiths were really very similar. We both wanted to learn more about God's will and to continue growing in our faith. I had been involved in the activities of the United Church of Canada all my life and grew up in a loving environment.

As our relationship grew I had an opportunity to mingle with other Mennonites. My admiration for Mennonites lost some of its enthusiasm. I got the impression that to be Mennonite was to be just a little better than anyone else, especially if you spoke German. It was in a Mennonite setting that I first learned what prejudice meant. That hurt.

*At times there seems a smugness about being born Mennonite, but generally there is an awareness that any faith must grow and change.*

We visited several Mennonite pastors. All were kind and did not discourage our marrying. They reinforced our belief that it was better for a husband and wife to be of one denomination. I experienced no difficulty when I decided to join the Mennonite church several months prior to our 1965 wedding.

Our church experiences have been rewarding and fulfilling since then. At times I sense a smugness from someone who has been born a Mennonite, but I have felt accepted in the churches we attended.

Due to job changes we have attended a General Conference and a Western Ontario church. In both we have been involved in a number of ways. Our best friends are Mennonites, and this includes my sister-in-law and her family.

While I now believe that not all Mennonites are Christians, many that we know are. The church we attend is a place which accepts differences, where we can continue to grow in our faith, serve God and have fun. I am happy to be considered a Mennonite. *A Meetinghouse article*

# The stereotype had to go

*John and Brenda Cosens*

Brenda and I come from non-Mennonite backgrounds and have been Christians for over five years. During this period we have always attended a Mennonite church and have been members for four years. In the last year or two we have begun to feel comfortable as Mennonites. I would like to explain what Mennonite meant to us then and what it means to us now.

Brenda had been a Christian for about three months before I made a decision for the Lord. She was attending a local church, but it was not until after I had made a decision for Jesus that I was willing to go with her. We lived only a few blocks from the church, so we walked.

As we neared the church building, I read the sign: Braeside Evangelical Mennonite Church. One word on that sign stood out from the others so much that it stopped me in my tracks. It was not the word Braeside or evangelical or church. You guessed it, it was the word Mennonite.

I didn't know much about Mennonites except that they didn't drink alcohol, they came from Steinbach, they dressed like Hutterites and they didn't do anything enjoyable. That stereotype in my mind was more than I was willing to bear. Not that coming from Steinbach or abstaining from alcohol was any problem, but somehow I couldn't imagine myself wearing a pair of black woolen pants topped off with a pair of suspenders and a black hat. Besides that, I was having enough problems with assurance of salvation. The last thing I needed was to get into a system that was going to make me more miserable than I already was. When I stopped in front of the church that day, my wife turned around and with a puzzled look on her face asked me what was wrong. I pointed out to her that the church was Mennonite and explained my concerns to her. She tried to reassure me.

*Stereotypes often need to be broken to let new life break through.*

Although I still had my doubts about going to a Mennonite church, we went in. My stereotype of the average Mennonite got a mortal blow. The people were dressed normal and many even had smiles on their faces.

We noticed some cultural differences. For example, German was spoken by some on occasion. These differences, however, were minor, and they became even less significant as we experienced God's love through these believers. We soon joined the church because we saw these people as our brothers and sisters in the Lord. However, even though we joined the church, we did not consider

ourselves Mennonites. The word Mennonite identified to us an ethnic group. Although we could go along with the doctrines of the church and could join in the fellowship and worship, we could never change our cultural heritage.

We learned that the word Mennonite was being used in two different ways. It was being used by some to identify a people of a specific cultural heritage and by others to identify a people of a specific spiritual heritage. As we traced our history back to the Anabaptists we began to see the history of the Mennonites as a spiritual pilgrimage. At times their spiritual light shone brightly, at other times it was only a glowing ember. Both good and bad were part of the spiritual heritage. Their insights into the Bible and the experiences which resulted were an encouragement to us. Yes, they were our spiritual forebears. Their spiritual pilgrimage directly influences our spiritual pilgrimage today.

People, Mennonite and non-Mennonite alike, often point out to us that Cosens is not a Mennonite name. "Well," we respond, "it is now." *A Meetinghouse article*

*John and Brenda Cosens are members of the Braeside Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC) in Winnipeg.*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**U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield** told a Harvard University audience that churches who try to mobilize political force have often lost their moral influence. "I believe that it's when the church lacks spiritual dynamic, when it cannot exercise moral force," Hatfield said, "that it most frequently turns to political force." During his two-evening exploration of Christian political involvement, Hatfield, who has served 18 years in the Senate, called the Christian attempts to control political events "disastrous." (*Religious News Service*)

**The National Endowment for the Humanities** has offered the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., a matching grant for a three-year project to make books in the library more accessible. The MLA has been granted $148,456 by NEH. To obtain the full grant Bethel must fund some specific projects totaling $48,843. The MLA is jointly owned and operated by Bethel College and the General Conference and contains one of the largest and most important collections of Anabaptist/Mennonite materials in the world, outside Amsterdam and Goshen, Ind.

# NEWS

## Mennonite seminaries see faculty changes

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—Actions on new appointments, resignations, reappointments, 1984 graduates, steps toward increasing the ratio of women faculty in the next decade and updates on part-time instructors for the 1984-85 year were major items which occupied the boards of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in their spring meeting May 31 - June 1.

Newly appointed to administrative, faculty or adjunct faculty positions were Richard A. Kauffman, Scottdale, Pa., Ann Yoder Showalter, Chicago, and Leland Harder, North Newton, Kan.

The Goshen Biblical Seminary board of overseers appointed Richard A. Kauffman as administrative vice president for a three-year term beginning Aug. 1.

Kauffman will join the GBS administrative team half time, relieving the overload of president Marlin E. Miller, who has carried a half-time administrative position full time in addition to half time in teaching.

Kauffman will also carry an AMBS portfolio as liaison to conference-based theological education programs and teach one course per semester in the history, theology and ethics department.

Joseph Hertzler will continue as GBS vice president for finance and development. He will also carry several responsibilities for seminary business matters. A reallocation of some of his previous duties will allow him to invest more time in special fund-raising efforts.

The two boards approved the appointment of Ann Yoder Showalter as assistant director of field education for a one-year term beginning July 1. A longer-term appointment is an option.

Ann, with her husband, Ray, is active in the Oak Park (Ill.) Mennonite Church, where she chairs the worship committee. She is currently employed at the Christian Industrial League as a pastoral counselor in the women's program. During her up to four-fifths-time employment at AMBS, Ann will commute from Chicago for the coming year.

The boards appointed Leland Harder as adjunct faculty member of AMBS to serve up to three years as coordinator of the Great Plains Seminary Education Program, beginning July 1. Harder, formerly on the AMBS faculty, carries on the position held by the late Elmer Ediger. J. Winfield Fretz served as interim coordinator.

The GBS board accepted the resignations of John H. Yoder, professor of theology, and Daniel Haarer, director of development and liaison with conference-based education programs.

*New member of the Mennonite Biblical Seminary board Phyllis Baumgartner (right) of Berne, Ind., is pictured with new student representatives on the MBS board, Eleanor Epp Stobbe (left), St. Catharines, Ont., and Harold Peters-Fransen, Winnipeg.*

John H. Yoder has been an adjunct faculty member since 1977, teaching one-fourth time and having additional assignments during the summer months. He was a teaching and administrative faculty member of GBS from 1965 to 1977, when he joined the faculty of the department of theology at Notre Dame University. Yoder's resignation was effective June 1. He plans to be on leave during the next academic year. After the leave he will continue teaching at Notre Dame.

Daniel Haarer will conclude his assignment with GBS effective July 30. His assignment included 20 percent as GBS liaison with conference-based theological education and 80 percent in GBS fund raising.

In reappointments the boards approved the recommendation that Weyburn W. Groff continue as registrar for the triennium beginning July 1.

The boards reappointed Ann Keener Gingrich as pastoral counselor for the coming year, beginning Sept. 1. The assignment is for one day a week.

The MBS board reappointed Ronald Hunsicker as adjunct faculty as liaison between the department of pastoral services of Memorial Hospital, South Bend, Ind., and AMBS for Clinical Pastoral Education. Hunsicker will teach as needed, provide consultation and assist in special seminars.

In other actions the boards approved:

- a total of 33 candidates for graduation in degree and certificate programs,
- formation of an AMBS women's advisory council, effective July 1, to work as an advisory body to the administrative committee and to aid in achieving implementation of the task force on

**The conviction of Christian** lay worker Stacy Lynn Merkt, 29, on three counts of felony relating to the transporting of illegal Salvadorans finds the ecumenical sanctuary movement in the United States at a crossroads, according to Ecumenical Press Service. Merkt was tried in Brownsville, Texas, May 4-13. This marks the first time the U.S. government has used legal action to interfere with the sanctuary movement, which involves some 35,000 Americans who comprise more than 100 congregations and ecumenical groups backed by some 1,200 supporting churches, including several Mennonites groups.

**Jennis B. Hofer,** 45, a member of Bethany Mennonite Church, rural Freeman, S.D., is being held in custody for the May 17 shooting deaths of Andrew Wipf, 63, and Andrew Wipf Jr., 28, also of Freeman. The Wipfs and Hofer farmed adjacent land five miles south of Freeman. A recent dispute over drainage of water from the Wipfs' 80 acres onto Hofer's quarter section is suspected as a possible motive. Services for the Wipfs were held May 20 at the Salem Mennonite Brethren Church, rural Freeman.

**Bristol, England**—Local church leaders have been "truly amazed" by the Bristol Mission England meetings led by evangelist Billy Graham, according to Crusade Information Service. The final night's attendance was a record 38,000, with 2,954 going forward at the end to have an encounter with Christ. Two-thirds of those responding were under 25.

women recommendations approved by the board,

- a new term of lectureship stipends for women graduate students September 1985 to May 1993. The stipends would underwrite graduate-level research as well as part-time teaching at AMBS. The general goal is that by 1988-93 the three departments at AMBS have one woman full-time equivalent on a continuing employment track. One donor has pledged $3,500 per year for three years toward the $10,000 per year to be available for the stipends,
- that Canadian students, given work restrictions in the United States, be allowed to pay their tuition fees on par in Canadian currency,
- a preliminary 1984-85 budget of $1,795,045 shared equally by Goshen Biblical Seminary and Mennonite Biblical Seminary, a 9.2 percent increase over last year for the year,
- reviewed the teaching assignments of nine part-time faculty for the next year, and
- the continuing search for candidates for faculty appointments in New Testament (1985), church history (1985), preaching (1986), evangelism (1984-85), and others in spiritual formation and a librarian.

In an opening devotional, student representative on the GBS board Arden Shank spoke of expectations, jobs and uncertainties given shape by birth and death in the seminary community, the celebration of 25 years of association, the delay of the student housing building project, the pleasure of new faculty and the disappointment in profs leaving for new jobs, retirement or sabbaticals. *John Bender*

# Educators postpone creation of council

Winnipeg—Representatives from 12 Canadian Mennonite schools met here May 25-26 at the invitation of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada's Congregational Resources Board to, presumably, establish a Council on Education.

To the surprise of many, the relief of several and the frustration of a few, the council did not take shape. But it still looms on the horizon.

After 24 hours of consultation, the 30 participants agreed that educational coordination, professional teacher development, curriculum resourcing, analysis of student demographics, clarification of roles and tasks of Mennonite elementary, secondary, Bible institute, college and graduate institutions do need more attention. But the basketful of agenda seemed inappropriate for assignment to a CMC council.

Helmut Harder, interim president of CMBC, reviewed the reason for this consultation. In 1981 the first serious talk emerged in Canada about a new Menno Simons College. That gave impetus to a thorough study of the Mennonite educational needs in Canada. A CMC task force held hearings across Canada with schools, conference leaders and others in education. The task force concluded there was need for an education council in Canada.

*Eleanor Loewen (left), staff member of the Congregational Resources Board, chaired the consultation. With her is George Groening, chairman of the board for Columbia Bible Institute.*

At the May meetings, representatives from schools affiliated with the Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools, Mennonite Secondary Education Council (Mennonite Church) and Mennonite Brethren-related schools wanted to first determine how many of these needs could be met by existing organizations as they were or by strengthening them. Nobody wanted more structures to duplicate those already in place.

Considerable frustration emerged in trying to develop a strategy for the conference in relating to these agencies and schools. A large measure of this was likely due to the range of schools in the consultation (i.e. from elementary to graduate level). Concerns for non-Mennonite Christians interested in such education and for Mennonite professionals in public school systems also surfaced.

Consensus did emerge that Canadian Mennonite schools prioritize the above list of needs. These would be considered in preparing a recommendation to the CMC General Board about following up the consultation. To assist staff and follow up, consensus suggested an advisory group that would include representatives from each of the education levels.

Informally it was also suggested to convene the schools again after a year to check out experiences within the existing organizations and to see if there are other ways for cooperation. *Bernie Wiebe*

**About 100 people** gathered at the Youth Orientation Units May 5 to pay tribute to Y.O.U. co-founder and director Peter Rempel and his wife, Mary. Rempel resigned in April after directing the farm oriented work setting for young offenders for 10 years.

**Just over $426,000** was donated by Mennonites and Brethren in Christ to the 1983-84 MCC Canada Food Drive between Dec. 1 and March 1, exceeding the target of $300,000. The drive, which was launched in order to meet emergency food needs in Lebanon, Guatemala and Kampuchea, has provided money for the purchase of food for victims of war in Guatemala and Lebanon and will be used to purchase rice for Kampuchea.

**The community of Ismailia,** situated along the Suez Canal 100 kilometers east of Cairo, was among settlements in this region devastated by Israeli/Egyptian fighting from 1967 to 1973. The Ismailia Coptic (Egyptian) Evangelical Church has established programs to help in the reconstruction of Ismailia's social and economic life. Mennonite Central Committee has placed a kindergarten teacher, Roy Hange, in the church's English-language school, which began two years ago with 40 students. The school has grown to 150 primary and kindergarten students—from Christian and Moslem homes.

# New Hindi hymnal lets Indian churches sing again

Jagdeeshpur, India—On Palm Sunday, April 15, a new Mennonite hymnal was dedicated at the Bethel Mennonite Church in Jagdeeshpur, India. The book includes 150 new songs, many of which were written by Indian composers.

Keshav Rao, a teacher at the Janzen Memorial High School and secretary for the Mennonite Literature and Radio Council (MELARC), had worked hard for many years collecting the songs and preparing the manuscripts. However, MELARC had lacked the financial resources to have the book printed.

Recently, though, with help from the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission, 5,000 copies were produced and made available at a low, subsidized price.

"Singing is an integral part of our worship," Rao writes. "This part of our church life has been paralyzed since 1970 when the hymnbook in Hindi, 'Masihi Git Sangrah,' went out of print and was out of stock."

*(Left to right) Samuel Stephen, Sukho Das, Edward Burkhalter and Keshav Rao participate in the Palm Sunday songbook dedication.*

Meanwhile, no other hymnals were available in Hindi. The hymnals which the Mennonite churches had were old and tattered. New members who joined the church were not able to purchase any. The young people would often go to the church on Saturday and copy the songs which would be used the next day, so that they could join in the congregational singing. MELARC then took on the responsibility of publishing a songbook according to the needs of the present-day churches. They completed the manuscript but lacked the finances to send it to press.

"COM missionaries Edward and Ramoth Burkhalter were very concerned for the need of songbooks in the churches," Rao writes. "They used to talk to every visitor about this need. In November 1982, Norman Schmidt came to visit our church. When he got to know about our need, he took the burden of collecting money for our project. He sent the money to COM, which then passed it on for publication.

"After securing the manscript from MELARC, the General Conference Mennonite Mission's songbook committee, composed of Edward Burkhalter, Sukho Das and me, worked on it with help from Samuel Stephen and Ramoth Burkhalter. The manuscript was then sent to a Christian printing agency, which produced the books in record time," Rao concludes. *Peter Kehler*

## ACP acclaims two-color cover

MENNONITE

Chicago (GCMC)—For the second consecutive year the Associated Church Press awarded *The Mennonite* first place in the two- to three-color category at this year's annual ACP convention here May 22-25.

The award-winning cover ran on the Sept. 27, 1983, issue and was designed by Orlando Wiebe of Selkirk, Man. It pictures a scientist climbing a ladder to inspect the product emerging from a giant test tube. The title on the cover reads, "Genetic engineering: friend or foe?"

ACP numbers more than 130 periodicals.


## Associate pastor

Associate pastor being sought at **First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio**, with special emphasis on youth and young adult programs, Christian education. Other pastoral involvements. Full-time position.

Apply to:
Melvin D. Schmidt
119 Church St.
Bluffton, OH 45817
**by July 12.**

## Teachers needed

**Iowa Mennonite High School** has openings for **German and Spanish teachers.** Two part-time or one full-time position.

Send letter of application and credentials to:
Norm Yoder, principal
Iowa Mennonite School
Kalona, IA 52247
Phone (319) 656-2073.

## Have you considered Elim?

**Elim Bible Institute** in Altona, Southern Manitoba, offers a blend of Bible study, worship, community and service. Dedicated faculty and staff take a vital interest in every student.

For more information write:
Daniel Zehr, principal
Elim Bible Institute
Box 120
Altona, MB R0G 0B0
Phone (204) 324-8631.

**"And When They Shall Ask,"** a docudrama on the history of the Russian Mennonites, was awarded a Silver Screen Award at the 1984 Chicago Industrial Film Festival on May 18. The award was presented in the catgory of religion, ethics and brotherhood on the basis that "the film was judged a truly outstanding production—a prestigious honor that only a select few receive."

**"People who ask for help** in response to a radio program are often very needy—emotionally, spiritually, economically and socially." This was an observation from *Your Time* radio speaker Margaret Foth and Canadian media director Doug Zehr that emerged after contacts with stations, listeners and sponsors in Ontario April 27-29. Foth and Zehr wondered how many "Mennonite congregations are really willing to welcome and include these people and provide the services they will need."

**The National Council for Catholic Evangelization** held its first annual meeting June 10-13. The theme was "Evangelization: Focusing Ministry." A recent Gallup poll noted that 26 percent of all baptized Catholics over the age of 18 are not active. According to the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization Association, this would mean that the average parish in the United States has about 2,500 active members and about 800 inactive members.

# Seminary grads told to 'roll up sleeves of compassion'

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—The graduates of Goshen and Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in commencement exercises June 1 heard a call to roll up their sleeves of compassion.

Speaker Hubert L. Brown, pastor of the Calvary Mennonite Church in Inglewood, Calif., said the poor and oppressed could be helped only as the helpers put themselves in their place and understood the need.

Quoting Job 16:4, "I could also speak as ye do, if your soul were in my soul's stead," Brown compared the longwinded speeches and ceaseless arguing of Job's would-be comforters to the way churches and governments address brokenness and suffering today.

To exercise compassion in mending the broken community, Brown said, means living out a mutuality and kinship in the suffering of God's people. He said, "Compassion means to suffer with. It is a roll-up-your-sleeves mentality."

While Brown made a smiling, oblique reference to the church in saying that compassion seems to have run off "to a conference somewhere," he directed biting words to the Reagan administration for its betrayal of the hungry, homeless, jobless and underemployed. "Many people are being driven to the margins of despair by the most hostile administration in 50 years," he said.

"America is so caught up in the idolatry of national security that we are rendered powerless when it comes to being compassionate in the global village," he said.

Brown said Jesse Jackson "is not so much running for president as he is leading a movement for social reform in our nation. I'm behind him 100 percent," he said. "I wish some Republican Mennonites would join me. He's about compassion."

Brown quoted a black Baptist pastor who in a recent prayer breakfast cited the claims made for Krazy Glue. "There are some things which are broken that Krazy Glue can't hold together," the pastor said. "Our world is broken, but I don't think Krazy Glue will hold it together."

Brown called the graduates to exercise "sweaty compassion" and become "standard bearers for the renewal of compassion." To exercise compassion in one's daily concerns, he said, "will accomplish what Job's neighbors could not do."

The seminaries graduated 33 students. Two people received the Certificate in Theology designed for mature people who have not completed a college degree.

Seven received the Certificate in Theological Studies, designed to equip people for a stronger participation in the life of the church and to serve those who, while planning to go on to graduate or professional training, desire a better understanding of the world and the Anabaptist Mennonite commitment in faith and work.

One person received the Master of Arts degree in peace studies, representing a two-year program of study.

Twenty-three received the Master of Divinity degree, a three-year program of study to equip men and women for the various ministries of the church in North America and overseas, including pastoral, teaching, counseling, evangelism, cross-cultural and academic. The seminaries graduated people from Argentina, Ethiopia, Paraguay, Switzerland, seven from Canada and the remainder from 12 different states in the United States.

Of the 33 graduates, 19 are entering, continuing or looking for a pastoral ministry appointment; three are entering overseas ministry; three starting or continuing a teaching ministry; three pursuing further study; and one each undertaking an urban mission assignment, chaplaincy in a correctional center, short-term native ministries work, helping to establish in 1985 an Anabaptist study center/Bible school/youth hostel in Nova Scotia, and further discerning vocational direction. *John Bender*

*Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries graduates of 1984*

**Representatives of the churches** which own and operate Brokaw Health Care, Inc. and the Mennnonite Hospital Association voted May 31 to consolidate the two health-care organizations. The newly created organization is named the Brokaw-Mennonite Association and will do business under the name of Bro-Menn HealthCare. The effective date of consolidation is July 1.

**The most listened-to figure in organized religion today,** judging by the demand for his time and wealth of information, could be George Gallup, Jr., according to Religious News Service. Church leaders today hardly speak of the state of U.S. religion without citing one of the Gallup polls. A National Council of Churches official, Peggy L. Shriver, says she appreciates Gallup's work but thinks he is a bit too optimistic in his interpretations. "I think he pushes as far as the statistics will allow to give a positive turn to things," she said.

**The Commission on Overseas Mission** has appointed a committee to make plans for a major review of the ministries of COM, looking toward the year 2000. It hopes to identify issues and questions which would be helpful in shaping COM outreach ministries. A letter with a response sheet was sent May 25 to GC congregations, missionaries and national church leaders, to be completed by Sept. 1.

# Salvadoran refugee camps to be relocated to northern Honduras

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Plans continue for relocating Salvadoran refugees to Olanchito in northern Honduras, in spite of strong protests against the move by the refugees.

Three Salvadoran refugee camps—Mesa Grande, San Antonio and Colomoncagua—are scheduled for relocation beginning early fall. The Honduran Mennonite Church and Mennonite Central Committee have been assisting the camps, which are home to 20,000 Salvadorans, since 1982.

The refugees, the majority of whom have fled violence by the Salvadoran armed forces, have strongly protested the relocation plans and say they will not cooperate with the relocation efforts. Some have said they will go back to their homeland, in spite of the danger, rather than be relocated to the isolated Olanchito region, which is also near the site of a large U.S. training base for Salvadoran soldiers.

In January, shortly after the Honduran government revealed its acceptance of the relocation plan, the refugee community in Colomoncagua wrote, "We have always declared our position as being against the relocation. We have made it clear that it is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.S. Embassy in Honduras which are interested in seeing us relocated farther inland in Honduras. To achieve such a relocation they have neglected our opinions and feelings. They also do not take into account the violence which might occur to the refugee community."

The international agencies which have worked with the refugees under contract with the UNHCR have nearly unanimously backed the refugees in this dispute and have tried to prevent the relocation.

The UNHCR has responded by declaring that the relocation issue has been decided and that plans will proceed in spite of the refugees' or the international agencies' protests. The UNHCR has also stated that they will not participate in a forced relocation.

New developments within the UNHCR program have left international agencies who most vigorously oppose the relocation with less responsibility through changes in staff and a shift in contracts.

The Honduran Mennonite Church and MCC had been in charge of water, agriculture and construction and communication in the camps since January 1983, employing approximately 40 Honduran Mennonites along with five MCC workers. But the Mennonite involvement in the camps was diminished by a new work contract agreed to by the UNHCR which went into effect June 1. The Mennonites only retain responsibility for construction in the camps, which reduces their presence in the camps to three MCC workers and four Honduran Mennonites. Construction has been at a virtual standstill for months as plans for relocation have solidified.

One reason the refugees oppose relocation is that the new site is located approximately 600 kilometers to the north of the present camp sites. Refugees fear that if they are relocated there, the chances of returning to El Salvador after the present conflict are minimal.

*Refugee woman prepares noontime meal while granddaughter looks on.*

The Colomoncagua camps, home for nearly 7,000 refugees, are scheduled to be relocated in early fall. An MCC worker in the region explains that the removal of that camp may be easier than it would be to relocate Mesa Grande, since most of the refugees at Colomoncagua are women and children. The MCC worker said, "When they moved them inland from La Virtud in early 1982, they put the kids on trucks. What could the mothers do but follow?" Plans call for a four-day truck trip over dusty, bumpy mountain roads to the new campsite with frequent rest stops for the refugees.

Some people close to the refugee situation speculate that the increased security problems are another indication of the pressure for relocation.

In late April five Salvadorans were killed outside the San Antonio camp. For several nights after the killings paramilitary forces patrolled the camp.

In a more recent security incident, reports from Central America indicate that a Spanish woman doctor who worked as a volunteer in the Mesa Grande refugee camp was shot and killed during the weekend of June 9-10 near the camp.

MCC workers in Mesa Grande report that the military activities of the U.S. troops in the region are becoming more visible. Helicopters and planes have buzzed low over the camps during maneuver exercises, terrifying the refugees.

There continues to be a small stream of refugees coming across the border. In the Colomoncagua camp, most of the refugees that have come in the last few months are fleeing guerrilla activity and recruitment by rebels rather than army actions. Some refugees pass

**British servicemen at Greenham Common,** the cruise missile base 60 miles west of London, have been urged by Bruce Kent, general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, to refuse to obey "illegal and immoral orders." Speaking "on my own personal authority," Kent said that there was no such thing as unconditional military obedience. He quoted the case of a young German conscript who refused to take part in executing Polish civilians and was executed along with them. "That courageous young man comes down the years to remind us all that military obedience is not an absolute. . ." Kent said.

*Li-Ming Mennonite Church, Taichung*

**A new building** serving as the sanctuary for the Li-Ming Mennonite Church in Taiwan was dedicated March 18. The Li-Ming Church was started in 1976 as an outreach of the Taichung Mennonite churches. Church Extension Services loaned the church $20,000, which was to be repaid in 10 years. Almost half of the CES loan has been paid.

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through Honduras, stay in the camps for a short time, then travel on to a safer part of El Salvador. With the relocation, refugees will have a more difficult time crossing the border to seek refuge in Honduras.

Opinion within Honduras itself has been divided on the relocation issue. The local newspapers have reported on statements by the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Honduras, which strongly opposes the move. The Catholic church also opposes the relocation. Residents in Olanchito have traditionally been strongly anti-Salvadoran and have said that they do not want the Salvadoran refugees, whom they describe as "subversives," living there.

The Honduran military spokesman on the refugee commission, Colonel Turcios, said, "The Honduran government and the UNHCR are correct in saying that these camps are a refuge for El Salvador's guerrilla forces." Turcios is pushing hard for the removal. In April a local Honduran paper stated, "The relocation of families will permit the Honduran government to develop a better control of the border area with the neighboring republic of El Salvador."

Although some of the refugees have family links with guerrillas, the vast majority are women and children. Most were caught in the conflict or came from villages that were labeled "subversive," whether they personally were involved in the opposition or not.

One refugee relates the violence that she fled from in El Salvador: "When my baby was 12 days old, I got news that the soldiers were coming to the countryside again. Even though I was sick from this birth, I had to run. I crouched down with my baby in the pouring rain. I didn't have the courage to stay in the house because we knew what they did to others. Old people, babies, women, if they found you in the house they'd kill you. When we went away from our home and came back, all the people in the houses around us were hung from the roofs of their houses."

Observers are concerned that with the evacuation of refugees the border region may be used by the Honduran, Salvadoran and U.S. military for a sandwich operation to crush the guerrilla strongholds. One refugee spokesman in Colomoncagua said, "We are all convinced the army wants this for a military base. They might want to invade our country from here one day."

MCC workers report that the camps have worked hard at establishing a community that is not totally dependent on outside aid. They report that 87 percent of the vegetable rations in the Mesa Grande camps come from the camp gardens which are worked and supervised by the refugees themselves. Chicken and egg production has increased in the last few months. A fish production project is also supplying some food for the refugees.

The refugees feel that they have worked hard to make their camps into communities where they can survive, educate their children and begin farming again. They oppose a move that will put them again on undeveloped land where they will have to start over another time. *Joy Hofer*


## Leading minister needed

Leading minister required to work with an associate pastor and youth minister in a German/English church in Winkler, Man. Preferable starting time is **July 1985.** Applicants should have the experience and education to meet the needs of a large, diverse congregation.

Please address replies to:
Abe Wiebe, church chairman
Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church
Box 944
Winkler, MB R0G 2X0
Phone (204) 325-8053.

## Camp coordinator wanted

Responsibilities include coordinating the camping program of the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan. Includes working with three resident camps and a wilderness camping program. Program development and camp promotion are major responsibilities.

Send letter of application, resume or request for further information to:
Richard Krahn
Route 2
Saskatoon, SK S7K 3J5.

Applications taken until **July 15, 1984.**

MEDA CONVENTION 84

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**Sixty million animals,** including 161,000 dogs and 47,000 monkeys, are killed every year in research "to make things better for human beings," reports Knight-Ridder News Service.

**Entry deadline** for the seventh annual Indiana Mennonite Slo-Pitch softball tourney has been set for Aug. 10. The tourney, which is held on Labor Day weekend, Sept. 1-3, is open to any church listed in the 1984 Mennonite Yearbook. Entry fee is $75, with all profit going to Mennonite Central Committee. Last year 39 teams from across the United States participated. For more information contact Roger R. Miller, Box 165, Huntertown, IN 46748, (219) 637-3523.

**A new congregation** is to begin in Boulder, Colo., this fall. Marilyn Miller, co-pastor of the Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church for the past eight years, has accepted a call from the Arvada Church and the Western District home mission committee to move to Boulder by Sept. 1. Several members of the Arvada Church living in the Boulder area have been meeting together for nearly a year and see this as an opportunity to develop a solid base for making a witness from an Anabaptist perspective.

# Friendship Evangelism seminar draws strong response in Indiana

Berne, Ind. (MBM)—Some 80 people attended a Friendship Evangelism Seminar April 27-28 at First Mennonite Church here.

Congregations represented in addition to the Berne church were Maplewood Mennonite Church of Fort Wayne, Ind., Topeka (Ind.) Mennonite Church, Grace Mennonite Church of Pandora, Ohio, First Missionary Church of Berne, Ind., and the Nazarene Church of Geneva, Ind.

Hosted by the outreach committee of the Berne church, the seminar was led by Don Yoder of Tempe, Ariz. He is a church planting and evangelism staff person for both Mennonite Board of Missions of the Mennonite Church and the Commission on Home Ministries of the General Conference.

Many Christians and non-Christians are tense about evangelism. The unnatural, canned approaches that are often recommended and used cause concern. Friendship evangelism stresses faith-sharing methods that are less threatening—by building mutual trust and respect between friends.

Yoder emphasized the "friend-become-a-disciple" approach by citing from the Bible Jesus' witness to the Samaritan woman at the well and to Zaccheus.

The focus of the seminar was on making new friends, strengthening existing friendships and sharing one's Christian faith with friends in a more natural way.

The participants considered the procedure by which people become Christ's disciples, the importance of prayer and being filled with the Holy Spirit for an effective witness.

The presentation of many charts and two films aided the participants in ascertaining how to cultivate relationships (whether family or new friends), how to express one's faith in a free and natural manner and how to follow through with the new Christian.

*Some 80 people from six congregations participated in the seminar*

There were one-to-one sessions when participants shared their spiritual pilgrimages to the point of an encounter with Christ.

In order to assimilate friendship techniques in the congregational setting the participants divided into small groups from the respective churches to discuss and list possible ways of implementing those suggestions in their own church.

Interspersed throughout Yoder's presentation were the following quotes:

- "Evangelism is loving" (Keith Miller)
- "Evangelism is God's extension of his grace through believers who engage in sharing the life of Christ with others" (Myron Augsburger)
- "We will never really share until we take people into our lives"
- "I begin the morning with the prayer, 'Lord, I know you are up to some thing today, and I want to be a part of it' " (Bruce Larson)
- "Know people, their needs, where they are, before giving solutions"
- "Know the importance of a smile and being a good listener (not racing ahead in thought)"
- "The primary purpose is not to make our neighbor *our* friend but to be a *friend* to our neighbor"
- "Do not use friendship for selfish purposes"
- "The first four minutes are very important in an encounter"
- "The greatest ability is *availability*."

Friendship evangelism is an approach to sharing faith which involves a bond of friendship between a person and an acquaintance for whom there is a burden. Deep relationships provide opportunities for a meaningful Christian witness. Faith sharing involves proclaiming, demonstrating and following through with new believers and disciples. *Phyllis J. Baumgartner*

**"Is church planting being resisted?"** was the question asked more than once in a meeting May 23 in Newton, Kan., to plan a new thrust in church planting. "Sure," said one participant. "because it means losing valuable members to a nearby new church." The group of representatives from the Mennonite Church and the General Conference agreed to seek church planting leaders and support people to start churches in places where a witness is needed.

**Peace Child** is a Christian family musical that will be presented at Friends University in Wichita, Kan., Aug. 10-12. The play, being sponsored by Churches United for Peacemaking, presents, through the story of a boy from the United States and a girl from the Soviet Union, a message of how world peace could be achieved through the spiritual principles of childlike faith and sacrificial compassion. The Wichita production will be one of the first non-professional productions in the United States.

**There are 7,816,200 refugees** in need, according to the 75-page *World Refugee Survey 1983.* This number includes 3,304,000 Afghans, 1,927,000 Palestinians, 883,000 Ethiopians, 256,000 from Indochina, 241,000 Salvadorans, 237,000 Angolans and 230,000 Ugandans. Most of these refugees are cared for by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and by other UN bodies, whose total budget is $526,878,420.

# RECORd

## MINISTERS

*Chris Arney* has resigned as pastor of Warden (Wash.) Church, effective July 31, and will become pastor of Grace Church, Winkler, Man., at the end of August.

*Peter Bartel* will begin a two-year term as pastor at First Church, Winnipeg, Sept. 15.

*Gary Gerber* has resigned as pastor of Hamilton (Ont.) Church to become director of counseling and training at Calgary Pastoral Institute, effective Sept. 1.

*Henry Harder* resigned April 30 as pastor of Whitewater Church, Boissevain, Man.

*Adelso Landaverde* was ordained May 28 at the Mennonite congregation in Metapan, El Salvador, becoming the first Mennonite pastor in that country.

*Dick Rempel*, conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, has resigned that position effective Dec. 31. He will become pastor of Eden Church, Chilliwack, B.C., Jan. 1, 1985. He replaces *George Groening.*

*Steve Ropp*, Normal, Ill., will become youth minister of Central District (west) and the Illinois Conference of the Mennonite Church July 17. He is a graduate of Bluffton (Ohio) College in mathematics and served two years in voluntary service.

*Bruce Wiebe*, a recent graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, will become youth pastor of Foothills Church, Calgary, Aug. 1.

*Ernest Wiebe* is serving as interim pastor at Home Street Church, Winnipeg, until March 1985. *Robert Pauls* has begun a three-year term as pastor there.

*Erwin Wiebe* became pastor at Sterling Church, Winnipeg, June 5.

*Ropp*

*Bergen*

*Landis*

*Riediger*

## WORKERS

*Abel Aquino* from Oruro, Bolivia, has begun an assignment with Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section as director of draft counseling and minority peace concerns. He is a graduate of Goshen (Ind.) College and attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

*Betsy Bergen*, Herbert (Sask.) Church, has been appointed by the Commission on Overseas Mission as an overseas mission volunteer for a two-year teaching assignment at Hwalien Christian School in Taiwan. She will leave North America July 17. She is a graduate of CMBC and the University of Manitoba, both in Winnipeg.

*Dwayne Koop* has been appointed dean of men, and *Levi Keidel* instructor in missions and evangelism at Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., commencing with the 1984-85 school year. Keidel served 30 years as a missionary in Zaire with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission.

*Alicia Landis*, Indian Valley Church, Harleysville, Pa., has begun a one-year voluntary service term with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., working as a day-care aide in Champaign, Ill.

*Waltners*

*Evelyn Riediger*, Peace Church, Richmond, B.C., has been appointed to a three-year term in Upper Volta under the Commission on Overseas Mission and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. She will leave in early September for a year of language study in France. A nurse, she has also studied at AMBS.

*Christine* and *Harris Waltner*, Bethel Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., were commissioned there June 3 as missionaries under COM/AIMM to Lesotho. They will leave for a three-year term July 3. They will serve three-quarters time in pastoral leadership and one-quarter time in administration of the Lesotho AIMM program. He had been pastor of Bethel Church, and she had been a physical therapist at Good Samaritan Village in Mountain Lake.

# The Irish 'problem': a historical sketch

*Dawn Ruth Nelson*

"We had fed the heart on fantasies
The heart's grown brutal from the fare;
More substance in our enmities
Than in our love. O honeybees
Come build in the empty house of the stare."
—William Butler Yeats

Belfast, Ireland (MCC)—Northern Ireland is a divided society. The divisions run so deep that even to define the problem is to take sides and betray one's sympathies.

Peace groups in Ireland are divided over the solution for Northern Ireland. The Mennonite community in Ireland is divided over the possible resolutions to the conflict. Irish people are reluctant to talk about "the North" with each other because it is so sensitive and divisive.

What is the conflict about? What is the Irish problem?

Rather than defining the Northern Ireland situation as merely Protestants against Catholics, a more accurate description is a conflict between two mutually exclusive nationalist ideologies. One group looks to Britain for its identity while the other group looks to the rest of Ireland for its.

"Suppose you were a citizen of Poland and woke up in the morning to see a red Soviet flag flying over you? Or suppose you were a French person who woke up in the morning to see a Nazi flag? That's what it's like for the Irish nationalist living in Northern Ireland to see the Union Jack (British flag)," an Irish person explained. "To the Ulster Unionist, the Union Jack is a symbol of the British Empire—that there is no better, more benevolent empire than the British. It is the symbol of democratic values, of the civilizing mission, of the freedom of individual conscience. To the Irish nationalist, the Union Jack is a symbol of seven centuries of British imperial oppression."

The country of Ireland is divided between the Republic of Ireland to the south and Northern Ireland, also called Ulster. The Republic of Ireland is independent. Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom. The country was divided in 1921 when the Republic became independent and the six counties chose to remain a part of Britain.

Most people in Northern Ireland favor the link with Britain and they are called Unionists. But many want Ireland to be reunited with Northern Ireland as an independent country—they are Nationalists.

*Two Belfast youths carry gasoline bombs into the city's streets.*

The problems in Ireland have their roots in the British colonial era. The Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland began at the end of the 12th century. The conquerors intermarried, however, and "became more Irish than the Irish themselves."

England then attempted to consolidate her hold on Northern Ireland by giving large tracts of land to loyal subjects and forcing native Irish off the land. This plantation system succeeded so well that even today the settlers are distinct from the natives. According to the *Belfast Christian Family*, the British created "pockets of English influence for security reasons but also to serve as the leaven of civility and religion which would leaven the whole lump of Irish barbarism and superstition."

England retained control of Ireland for the next 300 years, but not without uprisings. In every generation one or more groups have challenged Britain's authority and tried to expel the British.

In 1916 a major uprising occurred, and several years later Britain granted self-rule to Ireland. However, because many Northern Protestants resisted self-rule, the country was divided.

*Violence in Ireland: A Report to the Churches* explains: "It seemed to many in the Catholic community, numbering some 70 percent of the population of the island, that the country had been mutilated in order to meet the relatively frozen position of the group that was dominant in the north, a group that sought to maintain both the British link and the Protestant ascendancy."

One cannot understand the Irish problem without knowing something of the last 800 years of Ireland's relationship with Britain. The Irish themselves are very aware of this history. In fact, the British say that the problem with the Irish is that they never forget. The Irish respond that the problem with the British is that they do not remember. A British journalist writes, "We must face the fact that the problem has its origins not in 1968, but in 1172, when England first subjected Ireland to her rule."

Focusing on Britain's role in the Irish conflict leaves one open to the accusation that one has taken the side of the Nationalists. In their most militant form, Irish nationalists believe that the British are the source of all that is wrong in Ireland. The Irish Republican Army sees the solution as a "Britless Ireland." The problem is that the majority in Northern Ireland who see themselves as British and Irish respond to the "Brits out" slogan with fear and their own slogans.

If the simple "Brits out" solution is unacceptable, what form should British responsibility take? The first step in any solution is to understand the deep historical roots for the Irish hatred of the British. A major step toward reconciliation would be for Britain to frankly confess the past injustices that have spawned the present tensions. Perhaps British Christians could take a first step in this direction.

However, the Unionists and Nationalists must forge new identities that recognize each other's right to exist. The Nationalists must realize that the British settlers in the North are there to stay. The settlers must realize that they have settled in Ireland, not Britain. There must be understanding and change on both sides.

*Dawn Ruth Nelson, 4 Clonmore Villas, 92 Ballybough Road, Dublin 3, Republic of Ireland, is involved in church planting and a peace witness there.*

# LETTERS

## I enjoy summery more

The article on summery and wintry faith (May 8 issue) makes valid points but once again underscores the difficulty we have in understanding each other. The author tries to balance the article by admitting we need both and then spends most of the article claiming the superiority of the latter.

The simplistic view we often have of the cheerful, bubbly (and of course superficial) joy of the charismatic faith is as naive as the charismatic's view of the mainline church.

Would you believe some people can actually praise God in affliction and be genuinely pleasant? And have we not noticed that many of those people who witness to their miraculous healings and praise the Lord for it have also suffered greatly and often bother us more by their deeper faith which tends to threaten us?

It seems we cannot avoid arguing the superiority of meat and potatoes faith over conversion evangelism and soberness over cheerfulness. If we are hurt and angry we feel somehow we are more honest than those who bear their pain better than we do.

Isn't it time we stopped giving pat answers to explain away the joy in some Christians' lives and the fact that they have been miraculously healed? And must we do what the article says summery Christians do, namely know everything and explain away those experiences which are not our own, to discredit other people's faith and insist that God do things our way?

The different parts of the body of Christ can recognize all are needed and we could all be free to experience faith in the way God grants us and not make so many boxes for each other.

Is there room in the Mennonite faith for an unspeakable joy or must we congratulate ourselves on the inevitability and superiority of our futile agonizing.

I am not convinced that angry people are more honest than those who praise the Lord even if they do it because of habit or sense of obligation, just as we often espouse our pacifism in order to fit in.

Like most people, I've experienced both seasons of faith as described in the article and, while winter is necessary, summer is much better and every bit as real. And both come by the grace of God. *Walfried Goossen, 16 Helen St., Apt. 106, Dundas, ON L9H 1N4*

May 30

## Appreciated editorial

*The Mennonite* (May 22 issue) arrived and my wife, Joan, was reading some articles out loud as I attended to small details at my desk. I especially appreciated the editorial—perceptive and thought provoking. *Neville Peterson, Bethel Mennonite Church, Box 2071, Wolf Point, MT 59201*

June 1

## See movie on Central America

My wife and I just saw the movie *El Norte* (The North), produced by Ana Thomas. Having recently returned from Guatemala, where the story begins, and being involved in the administration of programs in Central America, I see the movie as a particularly valuable contribution to understanding Central America.

The film tells an authentic story of a young Guatemalan Indian brother and sister who flee their village in the northern highlands of Guatemala after their father is murdered by the army for beginning to organize an uprising and their mother is carried away in a follow-up sweep. They flee on foot into Mexico, make their way to Tijuana and eventually, with the help of a "coyote," make it to Los Angeles.

The story poignantly displays the fear that drives people to flee their country, many heading to "the North" in the hope of finding freedom from fear and the economic opportunity emblazoned on the pages of *Good Housekeeping*. It also illustrates the difficult struggle for existence many refugees face when they finally make it to the United States, often finding themselves as exploited laborers living in fear and in a situation similar to the one from which they fled.

The film is outstanding for the story and the characters who reach out and touch you with their authentic simplicity. Most outstanding is the film's serious treatment of the subject without the gimmicks most movies depend on to attract the public. One is even impressed that the rough language, which gives the movie an "R" rating, is an authentic portrayal of reality rather than a box-office gimmick.

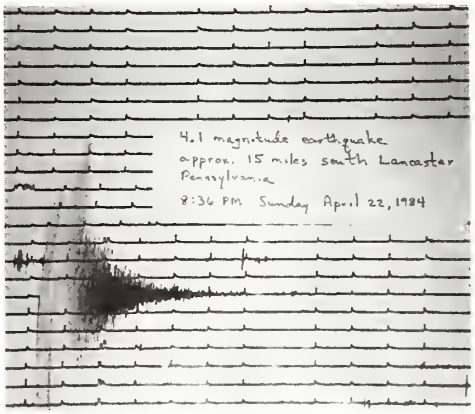
Our first reaction was, "If only the whole country could see this film." And although it likely won't attract millions because of its seriousness and because much of the film is in Spanish with English subtitles, at least we would like to encourage as many people in our churches as possible to see it. *Rich Sider, MCC secretary for Central America, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501*

June 4

## Further to Peter Wiebe

In our May 22 issue, Peter Wiebe wrote of quoting from *The Mennonite* on Sunday, April 22, in Lancaster, Pa., when an earthquake shook the whole congregation.

Editor Bernie Wiebe was at the Maryland Science Center, Baltimore, Md., recently and came upon this scene:




That's what we call going behind the news for hard evidence that things have actually happened. *Editors*

**Editor's note:** About 100 foreign readers of *The Mennonite*, many from churches planted through the Commission on Overseas Mission, receive the paper as a gift from us through your private donations.

These subscriptions are again up for renewal and we don't have the money for them. Should we discontinue them? Would you like to help support these gifts?

Mail comments or donations to *The Mennonite, Box 47, Newton, KS 67114*, or to *600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.*

## 25th anniversary

**Akron Mennonite Church** will celebrate its 25th anniversary **Sept. 15-16.** The weekend activities will include music, sharing by former pastors, reflections from former and long-term members and an ice cream social. Don Jacobs is the keynote speaker. All former members are invited and urged to attend. Write to your friends or the Akron Mennnonite Church office, Box 208, Akron, PA 17501-0208, which will coordinate housing.

# Self-help store with a plus

*Frank R. Trnka*

Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis has opened a self-help store that is different from many others. We leased a storefront near the intersection of two major city streets. There were already several secondhand stores in the neighborhood and the rent was high, so to handle thrift items would cost too much to operate on self-help proceeds only. We needed something with a higher profit margin. A book section could do this and could also be a way to tell customers who we are and what we're about. One person suggested we carry about 25 of the basic peace and justice books, plus *More with Less Cookbook* and *Living More with Less*. Another wanted quality children's books.

Using the book lists in *The Other Side* and *Sojourners*, the catalog from Learn Me—a bookstore in St. Paul that specializes in feminist and minority literature (especially for children)—plus my own library, I began to make lists and look for sources. Dale Sudermann, a former voluntary service worker, was familiar with Plowshares, the self-help store opening just a few blocks from him in Chicago. I read my initial needs list to him over the phone and within two weeks we had everything he had access to, boxed and ready to put on the shelves.

It was great to have these books for our opening. But the mark-up was the same as for the self-help items, so I still needed sources with a better discount. Through contacts we finally found some.

When the store opened we had 32 adult books and 26 children's. After nine months the list grew to 150 adult and 95 children's books from four major distributors and directly from 68 publishers. Book categories included peace issues, hunger and justice, Mennonites, simple living, parenting, cooking and nutrition, community, women and men, worship and music, cultural awareness and role-free (non-stereotyped) books.

Our primary objective has been to educate buyers, to offer information about the cultures of the people making the self-help products, to provide understanding of the social/political/economic factors that make it necessary to have the craft cooperatives as an alternative to either starving or working for a multinational corporation, and to share our strong concerns about peace. In this large metropolitan community we are a small number of Mennonites with a big message to share. We offer free literature from MCC Peace Section, MCC SELFHELP and about our local church.

*The Jubilee Shop in Minneapolis offers products for sale along with a message on Christian discipleship.*

Our best-selling book, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, is an example of an ideal selection. There is a strong female character, information about Japanese culture, and the peace message is central.

The books are not bland. Some people have been offended. One person accused us of promoting communism by carrying John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* (as if we, in our violent times, had nothing to learn from the Russian revolution). Another person returned Dorothy Sölle's *Revolutionary Patience*, a book of prayers, because she had given it as a gift to her daughter, who found it distressing.

Business has been brisk in books and craft items. People appreciate the detective work that went into finding two children's books, *God & Me* and *Thank God for Circles*, that do not use male language to talk about God. We offer an alternative to other Christian bookstores in the area where the message appears to be that peace is for after the rapture or after you die (You may get a foretaste of it by staying out of the big issues of our day) and that justice is more than I can take on alone, so I'll just worry about me and God and my personal morality.

As a new Mennonite I had never heard of Choice Books, but in talking with some who did know of them, it became clear, especially in the area of marriage and family, that some of these books present models that are the opposite of what we consider God's word for our day. Some concern was expressed that if these books were in fact an evangelistic arm of our church, we had a responsibility to see they expressed views consistent with our image of the family of God.

I hope other self-help shops will consider the potential value of including books in their offerings. I see value in reaching out even when there is a high concentration of Mennonites in the area around the shop. (1) It is helpful to have access to books not generally available, except by mail order, to be able to touch and scan before you buy. (2) If the rest of the country is similar to Minnesota, there is a certain detachment in rural communities, a feeling that the arms race won't touch us here, so we needn't concern ourselves. Having literature available may help people face their need to be involved. (3) As interest grows around various issues, there is the opportunity to develop a network of individuals who would like to work together creatively on common concerns inside and outside the church.

*Frank R. Trnka, 2105 27th Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55406, is a member of Faith Mennonite Church.*


## Church history teacher

The **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries** are seeking a person with primary teaching and research interest in church history, beginning **fall 1985.** Applicants should be prepared to teach in the area of general church history as well as in historical theology.

Please send applications and resumes to:
Jacob W. Elias, dean
3003 Benham Ave.
Elkhart, IN 46517.

# Traveling light

*Geraldine Harder*

Are you going to Strasbourg this summer? Or are you traveling elsewhere? Have you decided what to take along? My husband, Milton, and I have traveled over the years. Two summers ago we visited our son Jim and his wife, Karen, in Kenya and my sister, Lois Leuz, and her family in Taiwan, a trip which took us around the world. We took this trip with only carry-on baggage and had everything we needed.

Traveling light has these advantages: (1) less weight to carry, (2) less time spent on packing and unpacking every day and deciding what to wear, (3) better witness among less affluent people and (4) no need to wait at baggage claims.

**The passport.** Be sure to hang on to your passport. Over 10,000 U.S. citizens had their passports stolen last year.

The passport literally means a "pass for the port." The first known request for a passport by a traveler is found in Nehemiah 2:7. About 450 B.C., Nehemiah was appointed governor of Palestine by the king of Persia. He wrote, "If it please the king, let letters be given by me to the governors beyond the river that they may convey me over till I come to Judah."

**Luggage.** We each purchased a lightweight soft-sided suitcase 21″ by 13″ by 6¼″. It always fit under the seat on the planes we flew.

Women may take a sturdy shopping bag along for maps, travel brochures and souvenirs. Regarding the latter, your memories, notebook jottings and pictures will be your most valuable remembrances.

My husband carries a compact camera bag with a shoulder strap. It has two compartments, each of which zips up securely. There is room for the camera and some film in one of the compartments. The other compartment easily holds the passports, travelers' checks, tickets and other documents. (Never carry all your money in one place.) Milton calls this bag our "life support system."

**What to take for both men and women.** (The items listed include the clothing that is worn.) (1) A lightweight all weather coat, (2) one sweater, (3) short clothesline, small clothespins, a little laundry soap and a plastic bag for soiled clothing (Ask for laundry service at your place of lodging every six days. If there is none available at certain lodging places, wash necessary clothing), (4) toiletries (toothbrush, toothpaste, a comb, suntan lotion, soap, antiperspirant, shampoo—take the small size of toiletry items and be sure that everything is in plastic containers, which are lighter and do not break—nail file and clippers, small quantities of toilet paper and Kleenex), (5) shaving supplies (Milton uses a rechargeable shaver. It has a small recharger that works on 110 and 220 volts. He needs to recharge it only once every two weeks).

My husband does not use a toiletries bag because it uses more space and adds weight. I like to use a small lightweight toiletry bag.

6. Aspirin or Tylenol, a few Band-Aids, small plastic container of Pepto-Bismol, vitamins, and don't forget your medication if you need it, (7) sunglasses and case, (8) folding umbrella, (9) small Bible and favorite meditation book, (10) language helps if needed, (11) pen, pencil and notebook, (12) Jan Gleysteen's new *Mennonite Tourguide to Western Europe.*

**Milton's additional suggestions for men.** (1) One sport jacket of summer-weight, wrinkle-resistant material that is suitable for dress, (2) two dress shirts and two neckties to go with the jacket, (3) one pair of pants to go with above outfit, (4) two button-style lightweight short-sleeved sport shirts and two pullover sport shirts, (5) one pair lightweight washable pants, (6) a good pair of comfortable shoes (an extra pair of shoes is not necessary and adds considerable weight and volume), (7) enough underwear, socks and handkerchiefs for one week, (8) pajamas, (9) swimming trunks, (10) visor cap.

**Additional suggestions for women.** (1) Four outfits, such as four dresses or a suit, two blouses and two dresses, or two slack sets and two dresses (these outfits should be of materials that do not wrinkle or crush), (2) two pair of shoes (comfortable walking shoes suitable for dress such as Cobbies and a pair of comfortable sandals), (3) sleepwear and a short lightweight housecoat and slippers, (4) enough hose and underclothing for one week, (5) toiletries (skin moisturizer, other personal items, hair brush and other hair needs, scissors, needle and thread, shower cap), (6) headscarf and plastic raincap.

Don't take extras or just-in-case items.

**Get in physical shape.** If you are not used to walking, the trip will be more enjoyable if you get in shape physically before you leave. The heaviest baggage we have to carry is ourselves, not our luggage.

Milton and I discovered a way to limit the food we eat. Milton orders a full dinner and I may order only soup, salad or dessert. We then share the food.

**Traveling is a privilege.** Have you sometimes felt your conscience pricked for traveling when so many cannot and don't even have enough to eat? It is a privilege that does enrich our lives. The Mennonite World Conference will broaden our understanding of Mennonites, and we can fellowship with members from around the world. Experiencing other cultures helps us in our own Christian responsibilities and stewardship. Many share more of what they have after a trip than they did before.

*Geraldine Harder lives at 1101 Columbus Ave., Lansdale, PA 19446.*

## Faith stories

**I Heard Good News Today: Stories for Children** *by Cornelia Lehn (Faith and Life Press, 1983, 148 pages)*

*Reviewed by Ruth Unrau, Box 214, North Newton, KS 67117*

If we had had this book when our children were growing up, we would have used it for bedtime reading.

The first story establishes what the "good news" is, "Jesus is alive." The conclusion reminds us that "every one of his followers must be a light and bring the light to others." The 91 stories in between are about people who have shared the good news, beginning with such church fathers as Philip, Thomas and Boniface, and such church mothers as Mary Magdalene and Lydia. Then follow stories organized by country or continent, a format that makes the stories easily accessible for mission study.

Many of the stories are about people who have heretofore not been a part of our church history; for example, the seller of Bibles in a village in Poland who asked for bed and supper in exchange for reading stories from the Bible. The children were so enthralled that they begged their father to buy the book. That was the only Bible he was able to sell in the entire village, and he left discouraged. A number of years later when he returned to try again, he found that the stories had been memorized by the village people; they were afraid they might somehow lose the Bible, which was falling apart from use. Two hundred in that one village became Christians because of the one Bible he had sold.

Women in the General Conference looking for stories to use for home and church teaching asked for this book. Women in Mission asked Cornelia Lehn to write the book, which can be put alongside her other books for children, *The Sun and the Wind*, *Peace Be with You* and *God Keeps His Promise*.

The line drawings by Ralph A. Schlegel enhance the value of the book.

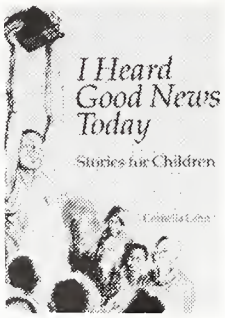
## Missionary relevance

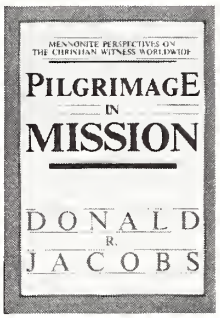
**Pilgrimage in Mission** *by Donald R. Jacobs, (Herald Press, 1983, 162 pages)*

*Reviewed by Erwin Rempel, executive secretary for Commission on Overseas Mission, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*

To be in but not of the world has been one of the dynamic tensions experienced in the Mennonite community over the centuries. *Pilgrimage in Mission* is a 12-chapter study of the place modern missions has played in this tension. Donald R. Jacobs, Mennonite missionary and mission administrator, is currently executive director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation.

While an attempt is made to include the larger Christian church in the scope of the discussion, the primary focus is on the Anabaptist Mennonite family of churches. Mennonites, perhaps more than others, have experienced unique tensions in efforts to maintain a balance between a theology of separation and a theology of evangelism. The struggle to




keep the church "pure" and at the same time "missionary" has at times yielded to complete separation and isolation from the world on the one hand, and to excessive accommodation and loss of Christian identity on the other. Jacobs urges his readers to view theologies of relevance and confrontation as parallel tracts which never converge.

Mennonites initially maintained such a balance but soon "spun a cultural cocoon." For 375 years they isolated themselves and thus lost their missionary relevance. About the turn of the century Mennonites broke out of this cultural cocoon and began aggressive mission programs. Today there are approximately 698,300 Mennonites worldwide speaking 56 languages in 52 nations.

Often Mennonites theologize after they act. Jacobs reminds the reader that a biblically grounded theology of mission is absolutely essential.

Very helpful in the study of the book are detailed implications for mission in a special section following each chapter.

This book and the companion study guide are highly recommended for use by Sunday school classes and other study groups concerned with the challenging and positive future of world mission in the Mennonite/Anabaptist church tradition.

## More than a Bible study

**A Lay Guide to Romans** *by J. C. Wenger (Herald Press, 1982, 158 pages)*

*Reviewed by Kenneth G. Bauman, pastor, First Mennonite Church, Box 111, Berne, IN 46711*

It is rare to find a Bible commentary written by a Mennonite. This commentary on the book of Romans has been written by the prolific author, theologian and scholar J. C. Wenger.

The commentary has a good introduction which serves as an overview of Romans—its author, cultural context and message. Wenger makes good use of the Old Testament background for Paul's message. He has an excellent summary of "Who was Abraham?" Events from Abraham's life help to develop the major theme of justification by faith.

Wenger also uses pertinent stories of prominent Christians from the past as well as today to illustrate biblical truth and its application to everyday living, such as George Müller's experiences of the sovereignty of God. The commentary also provides interesting insights as to how the church fathers interpreted difficult passages.

Even though the commentary was written for lay people, it challenges the serious Bible student. It explains pertinent Greek words to illustrate the deeper meaning of the text. It refers to basic biblical and exegetical resources which are documented and can serve as a reference for further in-depth study. It also provides modern archeological finds which shed light on the meaning of the text.

The commentary offers interpretive insights from the church fathers, from contemporary commentators and from Anabaptists and Mennonites. It is refreshing to see references to Menno Simons, Michael Sattler, Pilgram Marpeck and Hans Denk. The book has an interesting appendix entitled "Menno Speaks," in which Menno's writings are applied to each chapter in Romans. Several contemporary Mennonites are referred to, such as George R. Brunk, Kenneth Geiger, John Howard Yoder and Doris Janzen Longacre.

To read *A Lay Guide to Romans* is not only a Bible study but a spiritual experience.

# MEDITATION

## We are changing

Membership and attendance at Faith Church in Minneapolis have increased dramatically in the past several years. Much of that increase has been composed of people from non-Mennonite backgrounds. Now one-third to one-half of our regular attenders have come from some other background, most with membership in another denomination in their past.

The effects on our church have been felt in many areas. We who trace our Mennonite ancestry back for generations have been pushed by these new Mennonites to look again at what we believe and what effects our beliefs should have on our daily living. Many of these new people have sought out the Mennonites because their reading and contacts have convinced them that here is a denomination that believes what they have come to believe, particularly about peace and nonresistance and daily discipleship. So they come to our door, happy to discover a small Mennonite church in our urban area.

Our first response might be pleasure and a degree of pride because we have been singled out. But that leads to the response, "Are we worthy? Will we meet their expectations of what Mennonites are?" And we have been humbled and prodded as these Mennonites by choice lead us in rethinking how our peace stand can be shared more forthrightly and how the traditional Mennonite teaching on simple living can be applied in these complex days.

Some of our new members have helped us to be bold enough to undertake such demanding tasks as sponsoring refugee families and opening a store which sells MCC SELFHELP crafts and books on peace, justice, equality and other Mennonite teachings.

As we have been joined by Swedish Lutherans, German Catholics, Hispanic Apostolics, Baptists, Charismatics and others, we have been helped to put less value on the cultural aspects of our Mennonite heritage and to hold more dearly those central beliefs that Mennonites of all cultural backgrounds can cherish. We have several kinds of Mennonites in our church, so we already knew that for some shoofly pie is not a "Mennonite food," and others don't acknowledge pluma moos. Now we must also make room for Swedish *sandbakkeise* and Mexican tacos if we want to serve "Mennonite foods."

Our worship services have also undergone some changes. Our song racks bulge with three different songbooks, two Mennonite and one recent non-Mennonite addition that uses inclusive language. We are learning many new songs and hymns to the discomfort of some, the excitement of others and the challenge of all. In recent months we have had our worship deepened as one of our new members made song more vivid with her interpretive dance. Some new members who missed the frequent communion services of their backgrounds have led us to have communion on more occasions.

Change is not usually smooth and painless, and we at Faith are still taking stock, reexamining our priorities, what we want to change and what to hang on to. But I believe God has used people who have joined us from non-Mennonite backgrounds as one way to help shake us up and make us more receptive to the Spirit's moving among us. *A Meetinghouse article*

*Arlene Koch Holdeman*

# CONTENTS

There was a time when Canadian and U.S. Mennonite churches were an option only to those who could speak German. Today that barrier is largely broken. But we still have many others that make people wary of joining us.

It is exciting to see new believers break through some of the stereotypes and add new dimensions to the Mennonite game. This issue talks about the new Mennonites—their struggles and their joys—and how they are enriching Mennonite churches. Most articles were solicited by Meetinghouse, the inter-Mennonite editors group, and have been or are being printed in several papers.

Our prayer is that God's Spirit will speak to us GCs through these articles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Elizabeth Wiebe is a pen name, but the editorial is the writer's true story and feelings.

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# editorial

## *Rahab, I'd like to talk to you*

Elizabeth Wiebe

Rahab, did they ever let you forget? Even as a harlot you knew who God was. You recognized the nation Israel as God's people and you sheltered their spies. You are one of four women mentioned in Christ's lineage. The Bible tells us many things, but there is something it does not tell us. Did the Israelites let you forget your past? Were you ever known as anything other than "Rahab, the harlot"?

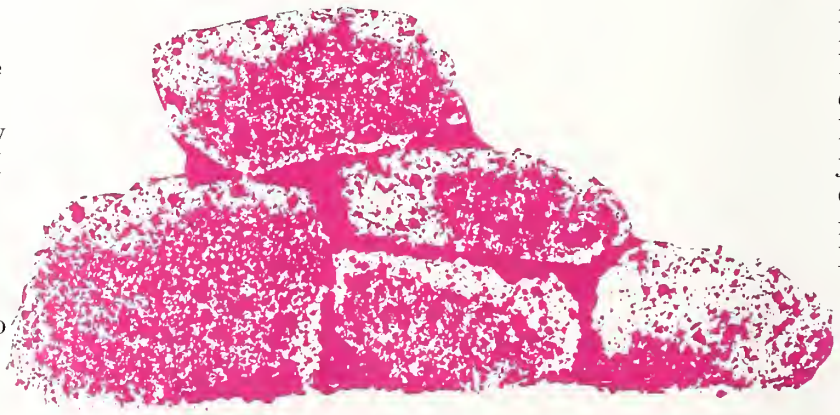
I need to know this. I need to know how to overcome my past, the deeds that eventually led to a police record and the utter blackness of my youth. How did you do it, Rahab? Were you ever able to shake off that title, "the harlot"? I am comforted that Matthew writes, ". . . and to Salmon was born Boaz by Rahab . . ." and there is no title attached to your name. God did forgive and forget. How good he is.

We, you and I, Rahab, are of this earthly world, and people do not forget. Many do not even forgive. Did you also walk in the despair of your past with violet shadows growing darker under your eyes from sleepless nights? Nights spent wishing you could erase the past but to no avail? I wonder this too, Rahab, when you went to worship with fellow believers, did the people rejoice at your presence? Or did the mothers keep a close watch over their sons in case you might get too close? Did they ever really forget?

I think that perhaps they did not forget. I think probably you were often shunned. My throat feels tight and my eyes brim with tears as I think of it. I am also shunned. I know how it feels to be avoided in order to prevent further contamination. I want to cry out, "But you don't understand. God has washed away all that filth. I am clean." If anyone hears my silent plea, I never seem to see a sign of it. It hurts me so. What did you do, Rahab? Did you hold your head high and walk undaunted amongst them? Or did you hide away and seldom go out? It must have been hard for you. God has forgiven us, Rahab. He has given us a new life and "the old has passed away." I wish that other believers would recognize that. I wish they weren't so cold.

Did rebellion well up inside you when you heard your title "the harlot"? My soul rebels and I want to break free from this mold I am put in. My heart weeps, "The past is dead, let's leave it buried." No one hears me. The past is resurrected. God honored your faith, so I feel you must have stayed steadfast. The opposition you had must have made you strong in your faith. Give me the words of God, Rahab, the words that enabled you to live with your past. Or is there no word? And you—as I do—must lie at the very bosom of God to receive strength to go on.

My only hope is to find my rest in the forgiveness of God. I am forgiven and someday the world around me will know that. When I die and am received into our heavenly paradise, I will search you out and hold your hand. We will talk and laugh and understand each other. Like you I will at last be completely freed from my past. In heaven's glory I will no longer be bound in earthly fetters. There my heart will be free to find joy in my salvation because my past will finally have been erased. For all time. *The author uses a pen name in order to protect family, friends and her home church.*



# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:15 JULY 17, 1984

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Seeds of hope in Northern Ireland

ASSOCIATED MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARIES
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# Can I be black an

*Hubert L. Brown*

Most writers for *The Mennonite* have a prospective audience in mind when they write. This is not true for me. I live in a highly urbanized and metropolitanized community, far removed from where most Mennonites live. I basically have little contact with Mennonite people.

I remember a time when I tried to be a Mennonite. Zwieback, shoofly pie and the plain suit were too much for me. I still hold membership in a Mennonite church, and for about eight years I was a General Conference Mennonite—although no one knew it. When you're part of a dual-affiliated Mennonite church, who knows what you are? A Mennonite is a person with a white European heritage. I'm not such a person and I'm struggling with membership in the Mennonite Church.

My acquaintance with Mennonites came long before my conversion. I was born and raised in Norristown, Pa., right next door to the heart of Mennonitism in the United States. During the mid-to-late 1940s, Mennonites of Lansdale, Souderton and Skippack discovered black folks in Norristown and sought to evangelize us. They invited little black boys and girls to their church functions. They picked us up in their station wagons and hauled us to their mission. Theirs was a hauling ministry. There was a wide array of activities, from Sunday school and vacation Bible school to camp programs and trips to Mennonite farms. My recollections of childhood relationships with the Mennonite people are generally good. These people were friendly, warm and giving.

Even though I was practically raised Mennonite, I found myself alienated from Mennonites.

To be a black man in the United States today and to be associated with a white denomination that has little awareness of the experience and plight of black people is a hard cross to carry. The black experience is radically different from that of white Mennonites.

According to Preston Williams, a noted black scholar, the black experience has come in stages. *The first stage was victimization*. Blacks were originally brought to North America by the Anglo-European colonists as slaves, which meant we were physically cut off from our cultural and native ties. We were denationalized, detribalized and ethnically displaced. The slaves belonged neither to America nor to Africa. They were the private possession of white slave owners. It has not been established that Mennonites owned slaves, but they have developed certain attitudes toward the enslaved passed onto them from the white U.S. society.

The rich Mennonite theology of love and service must take an active stand against racial separation.

# Mennonite?

Victimization refers to the fact that every black person in the United States is injured or cheated by the conscious or unconscious system of white superiority.

*Then came segregation.* Segregation is a pattern of settlement or formal separation in the use of common facilities, designed to indicate categorically inferior status. Formal and informal restrictions were applied to blacks. Entering public buildings by a separate entrance, working in industry on a separate floor, using separate waiting rooms, rest facilities, water fountains and attending separate schools. During this stage, Mennonites came into contact with blacks. They brought the gospel. However, Mennonites generally stayed within particular and peculiar customs of segregation.

*The integration stage.* This came with the Supreme Court decision of 1954. The Mennonite church produced a statement on race in 1955. While many called this period "integration," in reality it was an attempt at desegregation. During this stage the United States witnessed the most sustained massive effort on the part of blacks to gain selfhood and freedom. It began with Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Ala., with the bus boycott in 1955 and 1956, and gathered momentum until the crowning symbolic march on Washington. New legislation produced civil rights laws. Some individual Mennonites participated in marches and protests. However, as a whole the church did not become involved. Then in the late '60s, the dreamer, the nonviolent hero of the civil rights movement, was killed. The hope and despair ushered in a new era in the black experience—that of black awareness.

*The black awareness or black power movement* came in shortly after racism was officially discovered by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Report. After that and the death of Martin Luther King, Jr., blacks began taking cues from black power advocates. Among them was Stokeley Carmichael, who wrote in his book *Black Power*, "Black people must redefine themselves, and only they can do that. Throughout this country, vast segments of the black communities are beginning to recognize the need to assert their own definitions, to reclaim their sense of history, their culture, to create their own sense of community and togetherness."

Blacks had begun to say with James Baldwin, "White people cannot in the generality be taken as models of how to live. Rather, the white man is himself in sore need of new standards which will release him from his confusion and place him once again in fruitful communion with the depths of his own being."

Black folks who for years had hated themselves and tried to act white finally came of age. White folks in general and white Mennonites in particular, who had operated under the victimization, segregation and integration stages, were now at a complete loss on how to respond. When whites discovered that the integration model would not work, they slipped back into a separatism model. Of course, some blacks led them with their black nationalism rhetoric. The essence of the separatism theory is that separate groups can best minister to their own. The little mission work done in recent years is geared in this direction.

One of the greatest challenges facing Mennonite churches today is full acceptance of racial minorities, particularly blacks. In the '60s we used to sing, "We shall overcome." We have not overcome. The '60s are gone. The demonstrations, confrontations, protests and riots are gone. But the problems remain.

Despite the court orders and civil rights laws, blacks are still the last hired and the first fired. They are still systematically exploited as citizens and consumers.

Robert R. Hill of the National Urban League in a recent booklet, *The Illusion of Black Progress*, writes, "Contrary to popular belief, the economic gap between blacks and whites is widening. Between 1975 and 1976, the black to white family income ratio fell sharply from 62 to 59 percent. . . . Not only is black unemployment at its highest level today, but the jobless gap between blacks and whites is the widest it has ever been. . . . The proportion of middle-income black families has not significantly increased . . . since 1972. . . . The proportion of upper-income black families has steadily declined . . . statistical evidence strongly contradicts the popular belief that high unemployment among black youth is primarily due to their educational or skill deficiencies—when job opportunities are greater for white youth with lower educational attainment. White high school dropouts have lower unemployment rates (22.3 percent) than black youth with college education (27.2 percent)."

These figures are heartbreaking. How is it possible for black America to be in so much trouble after all the demonstrations, marches and court orders?

The Reagan policies of high military spending at the expense of vital social entitlement programs are creating more pain and hardship. Where is the voice of Republican Mennonites? This is a difficult period for us blacks.

Yes, there has been token progress. The Jim Crow signs are gone. There are black mayors in some major cities. The civil rights movement changed the visible and dramatic signs of racism, but it did not—and perhaps could not—eradicate or deal with the subtle forms of institutional racism. Nor did it change or even make a dent in the economic inequities of a society that can find work for black men inside prisons after they commit crimes but cannot find work for black men outside prisons before they commit the crimes. Yes,

To be black in the United States and to be associated with a white denomination that has little awareness of the experience and plight of black people is a hard cross to carry.

there are some blacks in TV commercials.

*My question to Mennonites.* How much of the church community I've become a part of stands for that which I deeply agonize over in this country? I wonder if the church has become, in the words of Bill Pannell, "My friend the enemy." Perhaps James Juhnke was correct when he wrote many years ago in *The Mennonite* ("Mennonite Benevolence in Civic Identity"): "Mennonites are an acculturating religious minority who have gradually taken on the characteristics of their American social and political environment." Progress in race relations is shameful at best. General Conference Mennonites can boast of their involvement in Chicago, Gulfport and Philadelphia—but that's about it. In spite of the jet-like pace of our technological age, Mennonites are still at horse and buggy speed in relation to and acceptance of blacks.

It is hurtful that Mennonite church bodies have not been faithful to their prophetic mission on the questions of racial justice. Too often Mennonites are content to mouth pious irrelevancies and deal in trivialities. Called to combat social evils, it has often remained silent. Mennonites also practice the unforgivable Sunday apartheid. Eleven o'clock on Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour in the United States and Canada. The rich Mennonite theology of love and service must take an active stand against racial separation.

If the Mennonite church does not recapture a prophetic zeal and take a forthright stand on the issue of racial justice, it will remain little more than an irrelevant 450-year-old social club living under the thin veneer of something remotely resembling Christianity. If Mennonites do not participate actively in the struggle for economic and racial justice and break loose from being a mirror image of the common patterns of race-caste, the churches will forfeit the loyalty of Christ and everybody else. I appeal for Mennonites to stop and listen before it's too late. •

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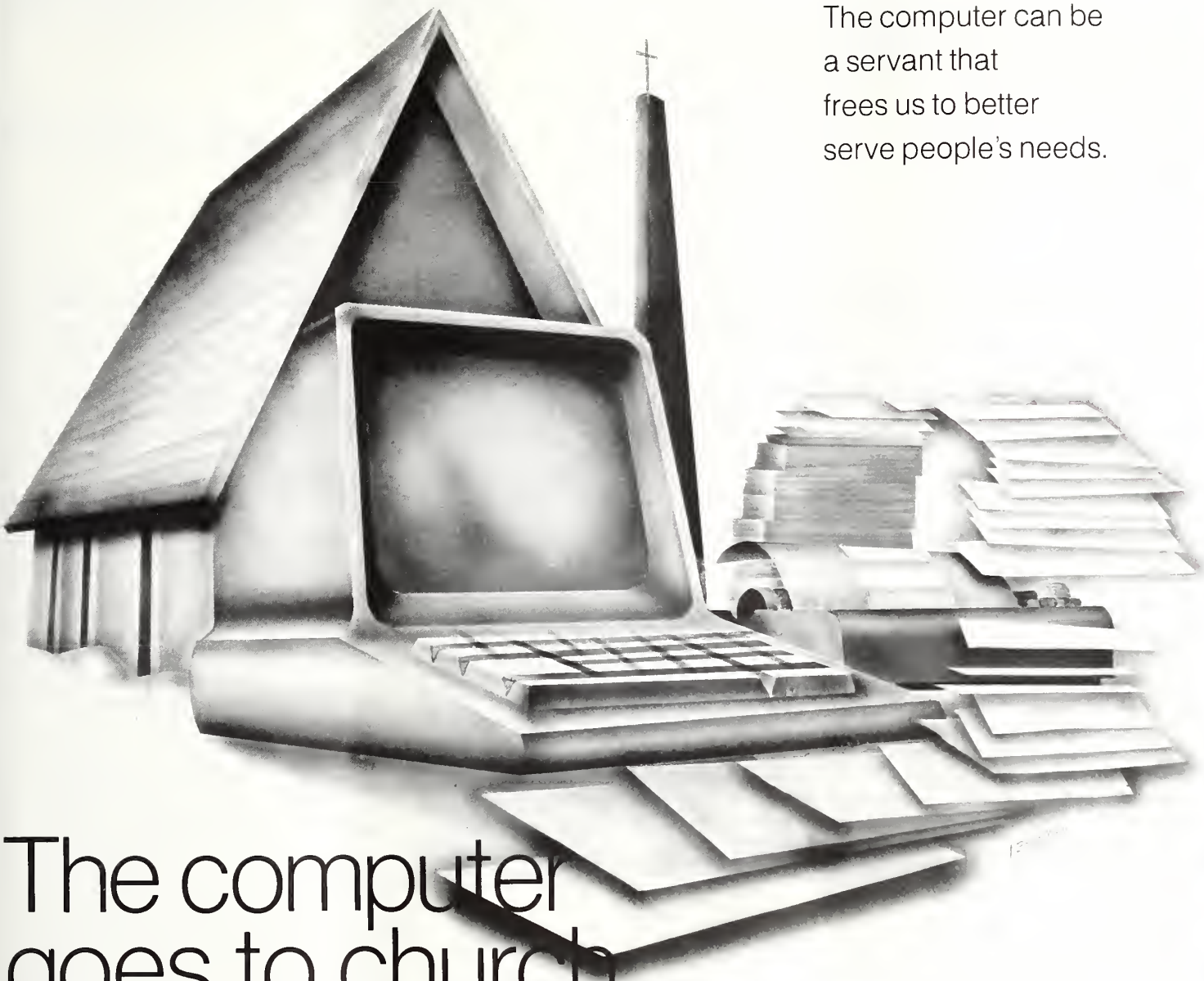


The computer can be a servant that frees us to better serve people's needs.

# The computer goes to church

*Kenneth and Anne Rupp*

If someone had told us several years ago that we would soon be using a computer in our church work, we would have doubted it. Within the last year we purchased a computer and now wonder how we got along without it.

**Sermons.** Now we both write sermons on the computer, using the word processing program. It helps to be able to reword, change, move or delete words, sentences or paragraphs with a few key strokes. Phrases or verses used frequently in the message are not retyped but copied to their new location.

When we finish the message we may decide it is too long. With a few key strokes we may delete points, paragraphs or sentences. The screen reminds us of the message length.

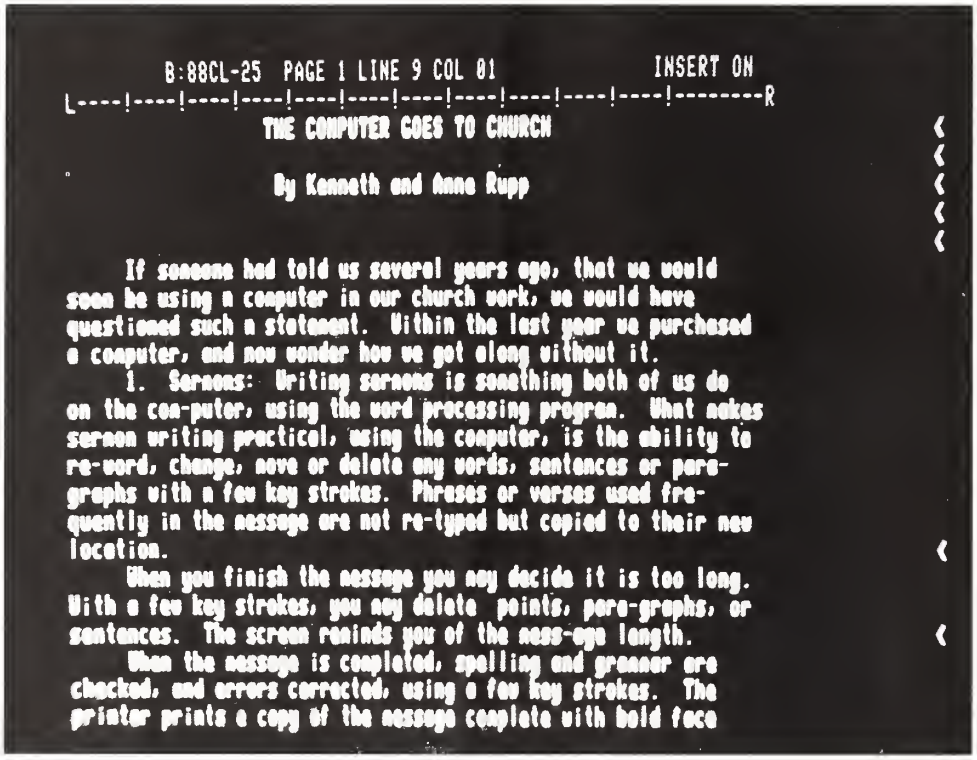
When the message is completed, spelling and grammar are checked and errors corrected with a few key strokes. The printer prints a copy of the message complete with boldface and/or underlining of sections or words to be emphasized.

**Teaching.** We also find the computer helpful in education. When teaching a Bible study, we type material on the computer, print it (choosing a larger type size for easy viewing if desired), send the printout through the copy machine and end up with a transparency to be used with an overhead projector or copies to be handed out in class.

Another area of teaching involves outlining biblical passages. Again, the ability to change, delete and move around whole sections simplifies this process. While teaching, we may be dealing with only a section of the larger outline and want it printed. We can block off that section, copy it, add or delete if we wish, and the printer prepares it for handout or overhead transparency. Later, if we decide to change a part of the outline during more study of the passage, we merely add or delete. It's not necessary to retype the complicated format.

**Counseling.** In counseling too we find the efficiency of the computer a valuable aid. Various inventories are helpful in premarital counseling and for other counseling. By programming these into the computer we can obtain results in less than a minute, compared to two hours when done by hand. The computer

Wherever you go and whatever you do, somehow you will interact with the computer, even in church, and be affected by it or else use it for your own effect.



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THE COMPUTER GOES TO CHURCH

By Kenneth and Anne Rupp

If someone had told us several years ago, that we would soon be using a computer in our church work, we would have questioned such a statement. Within the last year we purchased a computer, and now wonder how we got along without it.

1. Sermons: Writing sermons is something both of us do on the com-puter, using the word processing program. What makes sermon writing practical, using the computer, is the ability to re-word, change, move or delete any words, sentences or para-graphs with a few key strokes. Phrases or verses used fre-quently in the message are not re-typed but copied to their new location.

When you finish the message you may decide it is too long. With a few key strokes, you may delete points, para-graphs, or sentences. The screen reminds you of the mess-age length.

When the message is completed, spelling and grammar are checked, and errors corrected, using a few key strokes. The printer prints a copy of the message complete with bold face

can sort, score, arrange, compare and then give an organized printout report of the results. Additional key strokes will chart or graph the material.

**Administration.** A computer enhances and simplifies the administrative workload. The strength of a computer in the church is not only its efficiency but its ability to sort, score, arrange and compare. Some possibilities are listed below.

- Time-talent (gift discernment) data may be recorded and easily recalled in various categories such as person, talent available, time available, interests.
- Membership lists may be stored in the computer. Keeping a complete membership file facilitates better use of membership talents, interests and an analysis of what is happening in one's congregation. In addition, records of visitation, counseling and concerns may be stored in the computer.
- One can also store, organize and assimilate results of a church or community survey.
- Yearbooks don't have to be retyped each year. Name and address changes and deletions are made in the computer prior to the printing of the yearbook.
- Financial reports can be accurate and orderly. When the date is entered, the computer will ask for the information required for each report and print it out complete with totals and headings. By entering information regularly, reports for specific dates can easily be recalled from the computer.
- Correspondence on the computer is a time saver. This is especially helpful when secretarial help is limited. A corrected letter is quickly finished. If we are writing a number of letters, for example to college students, and want to personalize them, we block off the major section we want to write to each one, copy it into our letter and then add anything else we want to say to each individual.
- Letterhead and enevelope addressing can also be simplified. Addresses are stored in the address file. The computer will automatically address each letter and envelope. No need to retype the address repeatedly (especially helpful for bulk mailing).
- Neat bulletins can be ready in a short time. With the computer an even right margin and centered headings are automatic. We also have a variety of type styles, sizes, line spacing and bold-faced letters available with computer printers. If you have a repeated order of worship, the basic format need not be retyped each week, only the changed data. Announcements repeated from a previous Sunday are recalled by the computer and do not need to be retyped.
- Keeping track of books in the pastor's or the church's library can be less time consuming. Separate subject, author and title cards are not needed. With a few key strokes, any data can be recalled and the book located.
- A variety of worship records may be kept. Enter Scripture passages read or hymns sung and the computer will not only list these for you but will let you know whether you have used these earlier, when and how often. There is no limit to the access of information and data at our fingertips with the use of a computer in the church and church study.
- When working on job descriptions or constitutional change in the church which implies revisions throughout the process and later on, the computer again is a time saver because changes are easily made without total retyping.

When we decided to get a computer for our church study we were only somewhat aware of how helpful it could be. As we continue to use it, we are beginning to discover the vast potential for its use in the church. It has also been refreshing for us to know that you don't have to be a computer expert in order to own and use one. If you can use a typewriter you can use a computer. The various programs can be purchased ready to run. The advantage of knowing how to program a computer, however, is that it's less expensive and you can learn to personalize your programs to fit your special needs.

It seems to us that as leaders we often get caught up in time-consuming administrative details of the church. In a technological age the computer can become the efficient servant that performs many of these tasks, freeing us to be servants of Christ and ministering to God's people in today's world. •

# Playing the market

*Calvin Redekop*

The comic strip "Our Boarding House" plays on an abiding theme, living above one's means. The obesity of all the characters raises a question of how the boarding house has managed to survive.

Less mysterious was the strategy used by a college student I had in the mid '50s. The frontier was our recovery from the consumption deprivation of the great war and one of the marks of going with it was owning the newest and biggest auto. This student, a minister of the gospel, would come to class and edge into a chair on the aisle since he was too obese to sit in an inside chair. He often invited me to the nearest ice cream parlor for a banana split while we talked about the challenges of modern society.

In what was one of the most memorable conversations of my life, he said, "I have learned there are two ways by which you can live within your means: cut back on your expenses or increase your income. I have chosen the latter." As we rode back in his new Buick, he told me he was playing the stock market and wondered what advice I might give. I told him I was not acquainted with Wall Street and had never invested. He said he was having considerable success and had just moved into a new house "in the best part of Elkhart." Since his congregation was not paying enough to live in his chosen style, he had added a private source of income.

There are other motivations for playing the market besides attempting to live above one's income, but this seems to be a main one.

Investing in the stock market is a complex ethical issue. Raising capital by the offering of shares is not at issue here. (However, that is true only if the business is moral.) Hence, buying stock for expansion of a liquor industry would be out of the question.

Speculating on the price of shares raises some crucial problems for Christians. We begin with the least controversial. Speculating in the stock market is theoretically a way in which companies can raise more capital. It is said if the price of a stock already issued goes up, then the company can sell more new shares for expansion. How this *actually* works out is not so clear.

However, if supporting a particular company or industry is the motive, then buying the new issue directly would be

*The New York Stock Exchange*

the way to go, because trading stocks does not raise one cent of new capital. Thus it must be assumed that trading stocks is for the quick profit and not the support of a particular company.

A more problematical issue for the Christian speculator is that many stocks represent conglomerates or corporations with diversified holdings. Buying shares in General Motors may on the surface be reasonable, but who knows with how many weapons industries they are linked? Ralph E. Lapp says, "It is no exaggeration to say that the United States has spawned a weapons culture which has fastened an insidious grip on the entire nation" (*The Weapons Culture*, p. 12). Mennonite Christians would want to invest in companies known to be militarily clean.

We conclude therefore that trading stocks is throwing money into the weapons culture or at least a culture which does not always use money wisely and for the right purposes. As Christians, we must remember that our job is to clothe the naked and feed the hungry. The stock market may serve that purpose, but the connecting thread is long and thin.

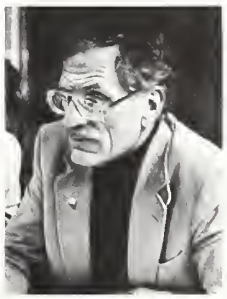
The most serious problem with speculation in the stock market, however, is the base upon which it is built and why people invest. Harold Underwood Faulkner, an economics historian, says, "Increase in stock market speculation is always characteristic of so-called 'boom eras.' . . . The influx of hundreds of thousands of new gamblers increase(s) the demand for securities and naturally enhance(s) prices." Of the Crash of '29 he says, "The easy money made in speculation as stock prices mounted, stimulated increased interest until speculators talked little about actual values and thought only of future accretion" (*American Economic History*, p. 643). Many Christians have gambled for good causes and many of us continue to do so. Do Christians gamble for increasing wealth or for the work of the kingdom?

The Bible teaches that Christians *should* gamble. In a curious series of parables in Matthew 13, Jesus teaches the multitudes about the kingdom of heaven. One illustration is the sower who gambled and won on some ground while losing on others; another is the woman who gambled a little leaven on three measures of meal and produced numerous loaves. Buying the pearl of great price is another of Jesus' parables about gambling and priorities.

Jesus would probably say playing the stock market indicates that the priorities are fast bucks for self-indulgence—an expensive consumption disease.

By the way, I heard some years later that my minister friend had overborrowed and lost everything, including his wife. Even his congregation turned him out . . . but that is another story. Sufficient for this day is the answer to the question, "Why do we gamble?"

I dare someone to write me saying, "I gamble on the stock market so I can give the gains to the church." What does the church get if you lose?



*Calvin Redekop is professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.*

# Is the KKK on the rise?

*Howard Zehr*

Last November the Ku Klux Klan appeared in its first public demonstration in Washington in 57 years. Police broke up the melee which resulted. Newspapers report Klan activity in other eastern states such as Maryland, Vermont, Connecticut and New Jersey. There have also been recent reports of KKK activity in Canada.

Klan leaders have been appearing on TV talk shows throughout the country to defend and debate their racist explanations of social ills. "White people in America are beginning to realize they're becoming second-class citizenry," says one college educated leader. "We're not trying to foster discriminatory programs against them (minorities), but we feel today the white majority is being discriminated against."

High school youth are being targeted for recruitment by the Klan. Youth auxiliaries are being formed, with the Klan hoping to make them their counterpart of the Boy and Girl Scouts. Literature designed for youth calls for resegregation and then repatriation of minorities back to their countries of origin and for white youth to get tough with arrogant non-whites. The drive is considered serious enough by the National Educational Association to develop counter literature for use in schools.

A number of observers fear that the Ku Klux Klan—responsible for much violence and terror in the past—is on the rise. Is there, in fact, a resurgence of the Klan? Should the Klan be taken seriously?

The Klan is, at least, changing its style. Within the past several years the Klan intentionally has become more visible, engaging in public protest, openly advertising and making effective use of the media. One faction now publishes a slick magazine, *The Klansman*. The Klan has also become more aggressive, leading demonstrations and actively seeking to recruit new members. And it is attempting to branch out of its traditional stronghold in the Deep South. Chapters are now reported in a variety of northern and western states and in Canada. Such Klan activity has caused Connecticut, New Jersey, Illinois, Michigan and Massachusetts to consider anti-Klan legislation.

In some cases the Klan does use traditional terrorist methods. In Talladega, Ala., a group of Klansmen have been convicted of acts of terrorism and violence, including firing into the homes of black leaders and whipping a white woman who was dating a black man. The National Anti-Klan Network, which attempts to monitor Klan activity, claims to know of almost 1,000 acts of violence related to the Klan.

Often, though, the Klan has attempted to be respectable, keeping weapons out of public sight and working through political and legal processes. Klansmen have run for political office and have filed legal suits as well as marching in demonstrations.

But does this activity represent an actual resurgence? Numbers are difficult to come by. The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith estimates membership at around 10,000. In April 1982 the U.S. Department of Justice, when pushed for action by people concerned about the Klan, said that Klan activity seems to be increasing. Yet while activity seems to be high in some states, such as Georgia, in other states activity seems to be diminishing after an increase several years ago. Therefore, while there may have been a resurgence in the late '70s, it may at this time be tapering off.

The importance of the Klan should not be overestimated. Although the Klan has become more visible, it is still a fringe phenomenon. While active in both the North and South, overall membership is still small, although it is difficult to estimate the amount of informal support it may have.

The Klan is also badly divided by factionalism. There are at least three major factions and a variety of splinter groups. In spite of recent efforts by several groups to form a coalition, continued conflict between factions seems likely.

For several decades after World War I—at the height of its power—the Klan may have had 4 million members, including high public officials. When they last marched in Washington—in 1925—participants were estimated at 35,000. The threat of the Klan struck fear in the hearts of many, with good reason. As late as the 1960s the Klan was a fearsome and dangerous group, responsible for numerous acts of violence and the deaths of civil rights workers and others.

While acts of violence continue, that climate has changed. At most of the Klan rallies in the North, news reports indicate that a handful of Klan demonstrators have been overwhelmingly out-

numbered by opponents. The Klan is not without the power to intimidate, but at a rally which I attended in Alabama several years ago, curious black observers watched with amusement as the Klan marched through the streets.

This is not to say that the Klan should be ignored. It is still capable of violence. Indeed, it may be setting up training camps in several states to teach the use of firearms and explosives. One, in northern Alabama, is said to have been named Camp My Lai "in honor of Lt. William Calley and the good deed he done in Vietnam," according to one Klansman. The Klan may have wider support than estimates indicate and traditionally has included law enforcement personnel among its ranks. The traditional affinity between the Klan and sections of law enforcement and government may be weakening—the fact that the "Talladega 17" were successfully prosecuted by the government is significant—but the tie is not broken.

The drive to become more respectable and more subtle is also dangerous. It could lead to expansion among more mainstream segments of society who share concerns about inflation, taxation and unemployment. The existence of racially based groups among blacks and other minorities may also have made the existence of such white groups seem more legitimate. Thus support for Klan ideology may be more widespread than membership statistics suggest.

Of more concern than the Klan itself is what the Klan and its possible resurgence symbolizes. A substantial pool of racism still exists in both the North and South. Racism is by no means dead. Some argue that it is on the increase. The Klan is an "unrespectable" expression of sentiments that others, such as many conservative political candidates, represent in more subtle ways.

The Klan also reflects important feelings of alienation among large segments of the population. A sense of alienation—long a part of U.S. life for many—is deepened by inflation and unemployment. In a period of economic recession, immigration and affirmative action for racial minorities seems to threaten the economic security of lower-class whites who already feel left out. Thus while the Talladega, Ala., Klan demonstration in May 1980 expressed generally racist sentiments, it was directed specifically against Cuban immigrants. A backlash against minority gains seems to be a crucial part of the Klan resurgence, but a vacuum created by the absence of strong political leadership on the local and national level may also have contributed.

The Klan is also a symptom of a strain of vigilantism which has long been part of U.S. life. Although the rule of law is in some ways firmly embedded, we have an enduring sense that the legal and political processes have gone awry and that we must take things into our own hands in order to save the nation.

As a people concerned about justice and fairness, we must take seriously the attitudes and needs which the Klan represents. Racism is alive, and substantial socioeconomic problems remain. As tensions rise in an era of economic and political crises, we may expect to see racism and simple solutions surface as an expression of these discontents.

Government action against the Klan is essential, but overreaction to demonstrations and heavy law enforcement involvement may only serve to increase the Klan's visibility. Furthermore, repressive measures taken against the Klan can easily represent a threat to all of our civil liberties. A recent court order requiring one faction of the Klan to divulge its membership lists is an ominous sign. While we may detest what the Klan stands for, members of peace churches cannot fall into the trap of simply looking to the state to stop the Klan.

The importance of the Klan must not be overlooked, but neither should it be overestimated. It cannot be dismissed as a small group of cranks, but neither can it be treated as a massive threat. Ignoring the Klan and the sentiments it represents is not the answer, but neither is repression.

*Howard Zehr is the director of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Office of Criminal Justice, 220 W. High St., Elkhart, IN 46516.*

*The tensest moment during the KKK march against Cuban immigration in Talladega, Ala., in May 1980 came when police chief Sparks informed them that no weapons would be allowed and that metal detectors would be used to enforce this ban. In addition to traditional KKK robes, klansmen wore and offered for sale "Invisible Empire" T-shirts.*

**ALIVE . . . 85! Evangelism and Church Growth in Action,** an inter-Mennonite/Church of the Brethren evangelism event, will be held April 11-14, 1985, at the Regency Hotel in Denver. The purpose of the event is to "celebrate the good news of the gospel," said Arthur Climenhaga, chairman of the planning committee, which met May 21-22 in Denver to plan the overall program. "We need to underscore the evangelistic mission of the church," said Climenhaga, "to inspire and call to renewed commitment to Jesus Christ and to instruct and equip believers for the ministry of evangelism." The planning committee, appointed by the Council of Moderators and Secretaries, includes Climenhaga of the Brethren in Christ Church, Henry Schmidt of the Mennonite Brethren Church, Floyd Bartel of the General Conference, Eugene Seals of the Mennonite Church and John Tomlonson of the Church of the Brethren. A theme text to help focus the convention is "Sounding Forth the Word of Life" (1 Thessalonians 1:8). The committee invites anyone interested to submit proposals for workshops in the area of evangelism by Sept. 1 to Laban Peachey, ALIVE . . . 85, Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526.

# NEWS

Agreement reached on registration

## Government drops charges against Epp

Wichita, Kan. (GCMC)—Government prosecutors agreed to drop criminal charges against Mennonite non-registrant Charles Epp on June 25 after a settlement was reached behind the closed chamber doors of federal judge Frank Theis.

The agreement allowed Epp to provide all the information required for draft registration on a blank sheet of paper and attach it to a standard registration card, along with a statement that the information could be used for registration purposes. The Selective Service, meanwhile, agreed to accept the information on the sheet and use it to register him. Both sides walked away from the courthouse claiming victory.

The settlement came midway through the trial proceedings, after the government called three witnesses and rested its case.

In commenting on the dismissal, Epp said he felt vindicated by the settlement. "The government ended up accepting the fact that I was not willing to provide my symbolic obedience," he said. "I don't feel what I've done is any different from what I've done in the past. I've supplied this information before and I haven't signed my name on a registration form.

"Signing on that form, for me, means a symbolic step of obedience, acknowledging they can use my name in a threat to the Soviet Union and use it in another step in the escalation of the arms race."

Eric Bruce, Epp's attorney, claimed that the government essentially had "backed off" and had been afraid to leave the matter in the hands of the jury. "The government agreed to accept what Chuck had already given them," he said. Regarding what implications Epp's case may have for other non-registrants, Bruce was less sure. "A lot will depend on how others decide to deal with the draft," he conceded.

*Epp*

Meanwhile, Jack Williams, assistant U.S. attorney in the case, said, "The Department of Justice's position is that this . . . is not a precedent in anyway."

According to the June 26 *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*, Epp's case is the first non-registration case in which the U.S. Justice Department has agreed to drop charges. So far, only 16 indictments on

### Grateful for support

*The Mennonite*'s Gordon Houser talked to Chuck Epp on June 27, two days after his case was dismissed in federal court. Epp is living in North Newton, Kan.

*The Mennonite:* As you reflect on your non-registration position and the court process, do you have any regrets?

*Epp:* No. I feel good about the process. I'm glad we raised the pretrial issues [about selective prosecution] and that we raised legal issues throughout.

*TM:* How do you feel about the support or lack of support you and your family received from the church?

*Epp:* I'm very grateful for the support of the General Conference offices and the many individuals who supported me. It eased the mental pressure.

*TM:* What about your local congregation [Bethesda Mennonite Church, Henderson, Neb.]?

*Epp:* There was some support and some opposition. I don't feel bitter about that. Those individuals are entitled to express their views.

*TM:* Has the General Conference fulfilled its agreement to support non-registrants?

*Epp:* Yes. Very much.

*TM:* How has this process affected your Christian faith?

*Epp:* It's matured. I've matured. I'm still sorting this out, so it's hard to say specifically, but it's changed me in good ways. I'm more committed to working for peace in the world through the political processes.

*TM:* What are your plans now?

*Epp:* My plans aren't finalized, but I hope to be working through Mennonite Central Committee in Washington for the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors and the World Peace Tax Fund for the next two years.

**Thousands of Christians** in 40 states participated in vigils, worship services and public demonstrations against the nuclear arms race on Peace Pentecost weekend, June 10-11. At least 40 were arrested for participating in prayerful acts of civil disobedience. According to Jim Wallis of Sojourners in Washington, the group coordinating the Peace Pentecost activities, all these events are further indication of "the deepening commitment in the churches to stop the nuclear arms race and abolish nuclear weapons. Like the disciples on the first Pentecost, more and more U.S. Christians are . . . proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ in the streets."

**The Commission on Overseas Mission** is seeking to facilitate summer placements overseas for qualified young people who desire a firsthand encounter with the overseas mission program of General Conference. COM missionaries serve as mentors to the summer volunteers. A summer service term is normally eight to 10 weeks, with a minimum commitment of six weeks. Application for service should be made at least four months in advance. Further information and application materials are available from Personnel Secretary, COM, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

**U.S. arms shipments** to the Third World decreased in 1983, but the U.S. share of the market rose during the same year, according to a study by the Congressional Research Service. The total dollar value of arms deliveries to developing countries came to $26.5 billion, with the United States providing $9.68 billion of that amount, or 39 percent.

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that charge have been made in the United States since the current round of registrations began in 1980.

A more far-reaching decision on the issue of draft registration will come sometime this fall when the U.S. Supreme Court rules in the case of David Wayte. A draft resister from California, Wayte is charging that selective prosecution was used in bringing him to trial.

Epp had raised the selective prosecution argument in his case by means of a pretrial motion, but Theis dismissed it in mid-June and ordered the trial to begin.

A member of Bethesda Mennonite Church in Henderson, Neb., Epp is currently employed by the Bethel College maintenance department and attends the Bethel College Mennonite Church. *Larry Cornies*

## COE appoints Shelly as general editor

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—The General Conference's Commission on Education has appointed Maynard Shelly of Newton to the position of general editor for a three-year term, beginning July 1. He succeeds Elizabeth Yoder in that position.

*Shelly*

An author, editor and former pastor, Shelly has served the General Conference, its congregations and related church agencies in numerous ways for nearly four decades.

After pastoring several churches in Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania in the late 1940s and early '50s, Shelly served as associate executive secretary of the General Conference's Board of Education and Publication (forerunner to COE) from 1955-60. He was editor of *The Mennonite* from 1961-71, then served as overseas volunteer in Bangladesh under Mennonite Central Committee from 1971-74. Since 1974 he has been self-employed as a free-lance journalist, writer and publicist.

Shelly is widely known for his contributions to curricular periodicals such as the *Adult Bible Study Guide* and *Builder*, as well as for editorial work on a variety of books, denominational papers and study guides. Faith and Life Press published his book *New Call to Peacemakers* in 1979 and plans to publish *Discovery*, a survey of the Bible in four volumes by Shelly, sometime this year. He has also written several dramas, pageants and scripts for a number of film and filmstrip projects.

Shelly graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, in 1949, and recently upgraded that work to a Master of Divinity degree through Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. His undergraduate work was completed at Bluffton (Ohio) College. He is a member of the Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.

## Western District uses teleconferencing to link resource people to pastors

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—For a number of Western District Conference pastors and staff people, attending seminars and other in-service training events has come a lot closer to home.

Since October of last year, WDC has used the concept of teleconferencing to connect resource people with conference leadership for the purpose of professional development.

"A teleconference can connect any two points where there are telephones," said Frank Keller, conference minister.

Some of the speakers in the 1983-84 season were David Augsburger of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., Wayne Oates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., Myron Augsburger, Mennonite pastor in Washington, and Martin Marty of Chicago Theological Seminary.

Pastors taking part in the 1983-84 series commented on their experiences. "The sessions have been profitable to us as ministers," says pastor Richard Malone of Clinton, Okla. "The subjects have been directed toward ministers, but it would be good for lay people too." Pastor Donavin Diller of Beatrice, Neb., said he appreciated getting in touch with people who have advanced learning and skills in specialized areas.

Diller also said, "I really appreciated the dialogue we had as district pastors after we heard a specialist, making the input relevant to our local settings. We probably would not have had that dialogue if we hadn't listened to someone together."

Taking part in one of the four teleconferencing groups in Kansas was pastor Floyd Bartel of Newton. "I appreciated the chance to hear some of these men who are not likely to get through this part of the country," he said. "And I appreciate doing this with other pastors, giving me one more opportunity to meet with them." *Marion Keeney Preheim*

**Twenty-nine Christians in Nepal** face from one to six years in prison for their evangelistic activities, according to the religious freedom group Christian Response International. Under Nepal's law, people cannot leave the religion into which they were born. Christians can be jailed if they are caught trying to convert a member of the Hindu majority. A number of U.S. congressmen are mediating on behalf of the jailed Nepalese Christians.

**More than 1,500 top officials** of nearly 100 denominations have been invited to attend a national Consultation on Pornography, Obscenity and Indecency, to be held in Cincinnati Sept. 6-7. The purpose of the consultation is to "unite the Christian community in studying the destructive influences and serious consequences of the growing presence of obscenity, pornography and indecency in [the United States]," to examine laws in light of the First Amendment and to strategize "to combat the problem individually and collectively."

**For the second year in a row** four classrooms were filled with lay students from the Vancouver General Conference Mennonite churches for four evenings in mid-May. The mini-school is sponsored by the Vancouver churches, who invite professors from Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg and Columbia Bible Institute in Clearbrook, B.C., to teach. Ninety students paid registration fees of $10 each to take courses such as Spiritual Discipline, Communication Skills, Revelation, Other Religions, New Life in Christ in Anabaptist Perspective, Church Authority and Discipline, and others.

## Northern District studies stewardship

Freeman, S.D. (GCMC)—A proper balance of inspiration and business was offered at the 91st Northern District Conference sessions here June 14-17.

Convening at the Salem Mennonite Church, the 182 delegates representing 33 congregations—plus a goodly number of out-of-state visitors and members of local churches—heard messages on the theme "Stewardship: A Journey." Speakers engaged to enlarge on the subject were Erland Waltner of Elkhart, Ind., executive secretary of the Mennonite Medical Association, and Raymond Frey of Newton, Kan., stewardship director for the General Conference.

In his three messages, Waltner approached the subject from the standpoint of Christians being stewards of God's grace ("concerned that everyone have the Bread of Life"), stewards of time and talents (over half of the world's 4 billion people are in dire circumstances) and stewards of one's own body by taking responsibility for one's health.

Frey spoke on the opening night and again at the Sunday morning worship service, describing himself as one also on the journey of making discoveries about stewardship and its broad meaning, of trying to discover what the Holy Spirit wants of us. "Making new vows as God's Holy Spirit gives you new insight," he said, "will give you new joy, new peace."

To further challenge the conference body on the theme, a choice of five "learnshops" was offered twice. These focused on stress management for Christian leaders (Erland Waltner, resource person), teaching stewardship in the congregation (Raymond Frey), personal financial planning (Lester Janzen), wellness living (Ann Raber and Phil Marner) and land stewardship (the NDC's peace and social concerns committee).

The Friday evening musical production, *The Road to Emmaus*, directed by its composer, James Bixel of Bluffton, Ohio, provoked thought. Too often the one walking with us remains unrecognized; too often the question of our priorities remains unanswered.

*Speakers Raymond Frey (left) and Erland Waltner visit during NDC.*

An overview of work in the district was given the first evening through the use of a "live slide presentation," accompanied by narration. The spotlight focused on 29 scenes of individuals or committees serving the conference.

A budget of $196,870 was adopted for the new year. Of this amount, $60,950 is allocated for the home missions committee to be used in helping small fellowships and in the four areas of church planting—Billings, Mont., West St. Paul, Minn., Fargo-Moorehead, N.D., and Duluth, Minn.

An unscheduled workshop on church planting was arranged for Saturday afternoon to take advantage of the presence of Don Yoder, who serves the General Conference and the Mennonite Church in church planting.

The education committee announced a forthcoming "traveling workshop" this fall for Christian education leaders in all the district churches, using as key resource person John W. Sprunger, executive secretary of the General Conference's Commission on Education.

NDC youth minister Michael Bogard reported on his year's work in this office, established at last year's NDC sessions in Henderson, Neb.

The NDC's president will continue to be Aaron Glanzer, member of the Hutterthal Mennonite Church, Freeman. The newly elected vice president is Elmer Wall, pastor of the Salem-Zion Mennonite Church, also in Freeman.
*Sieglinda Preheim*

**Over 110 high school students** attended Bethel College's annual music camp in North Newton, Kan., June 3-8. Music campers came from 41 cities and towns and seven states. The week was spent in group rehearsals, private lessons and individual practicing. Both vocalists and instrumentalists participated in the camp. New aspects of this year's camp were the addition of a computer literacy class and music theatre. Bethel's 1985 music camp is scheduled for June 9-14.

**The dedication of the new Vancouver** Chinese Mennonite Church (left) was held May 20. Stephen and Sally Lee are the pastoral couple there. Present were Jacob Tilitzky, General Conference president, Peter Retzlaff, chairman of the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, and Rinson Lin, a representative of Chinese ministers in the area. The more than 300 people who attended gave an offering of $3,000.

# IMHMC focuses on cooperative evangelism, urban ministry

Milliken, Ont. (Meetinghouse)—Cooperative evangelism and accelerated urban ministry rated prime time for the Inter-Mennonite Home Ministries Council June 4 in suburban Toronto.

The Hagerman Mennonite Church, Milliken, hosted the annual meeting, which this year preceded a three-day suburban church seminar sponsored by IMHMC in cooperation with the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec.

Made up of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ boards administering evangelism, church planting and/or service, IMHMC provides a channel of communication, consultation and coordination among the participants.

**Cooperative evangelism.** Don Yoder, church planting consultant for both the General Conference and the Mennonite Church, previewed ALIVE . . . 85, the major inter-Mennonite/Church of the Brethren evangelism and church growth event planned by the Council of Moderators and Secretaries.

Accommodations for 2,500 have been scheduled in Denver April 11-14, 1985. Building on Probe 72, ALIVE . . . 85 will exposit the theme "Sounding Forth the Word of Life" (1 Thessalonians 1:8).

As members of the planning committee, Yoder and Jim Nikkel, Winnipeg, invited IMHMC to react to projected planning, including suggestions for workshops.

Joyce Hedrick from Pennsylvania called for "tools to truly do evangelism, rather than merely intellectualize about it." "Let us insure," said Rudy Regehr, Winnipeg, "that the presuppositions of a peace theology permeate the plenary sessions."

**Accelerated urban ministry.** In response to an ad hoc urban steering committee from Mennonite and Brethren in Christ urban workers who met in late April in Chicago, IMHMC acted to use its influence to accelerate urban work in North America.

Identifying concern for denominational strategies for meeting urban needs with specific implementation plans, the urban steering committee pointed to needs for (1) raising awareness of urban issues throughout the church, (2) defining the open concept of "urban," (3) establishing long-range priorities, (4) identifying leadership training needs and (5) examining structures for addressing urban concerns.

**Suburban church seminar.** During the suburban church seminar immediately following IMHMC, 40 participants from across the eastern half of North America worked hard to identify ways in which Mennonites might build Christ's church in suburbia.

Leonard Wiebe, Newton, Kan., spoke out of experiences in planting and nurturing the young Maplewood Mennonite Church in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Vyron Schmidt presented a case study using Silver Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., and Sid Harms presented a similar study from West Point Mennonite Brethren Church, Collinsville, Okla.

"An expectant, realistic vision can permit and energize positive change," said Schmidt as he traced a turnaround at Silver Street from a 50-year membership decline, which had dwindled to an average attendance of 48 by 1980, to well over double three years later.

Harms noted that West Point, established as a rural congregation in 1913, has made a remarkable transition to relating to suburban neighbors. Of its 350 members today, more than three-quarters are from non-Mennonite backgrounds. *Willard C. Roth.*


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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**Winner of the Unity Peace Prize** essay, a privately sponsored contest, was April Yamasaki of Vancouver. The title of her essay was "The Nonresistant Ethic of the Early Christian Church."

**A total of 24 newspaper employees,** including the publisher, recently received $500 each from the *Salina (Kan.) Journal* as a reward for going three months without smoking. Publisher Fred Vandergrift had announced a plant-wide ban on smoking on the job, but at the same time offered the bonus as an incentive for workers who would quit smoking altogether. Thirty employees accepted the challenge, but six were unable to last the 90 days.

**Seven anti-nuclear protesters,** including three members of Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church, were sentenced June 25 to pay fines of $300 each within 30 days for trying to conduct a prayer meeting inside the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant on Palm Sunday. At the trial several weeks earlier, Peter J. Ediger, co-pastor of the Arvada Church and a defendant, tried to call "the Spirit of the Creator" as his witness. He asked Judge Zita Weinshienk to declare five minutes of silence, saying, "The witness I'm calling on speaks best in silence." Weinshienk said the separation of church and state forbids holding a religious ceremony in the courtroom.

# Central American Mennonite leaders discuss place of church

Antigua, Guatemala (MCC)—"We Anabaptists face a great challenge. Central America demands of us, as 16th-century Europe demanded of the Anabaptists of that time, fundamental responses related not only to eternity but also to the present situation," Guatemala Mennonite Church president Gilberto Flores told fellow Mennonites in May.

Flores was speaking at Desafio (Challenge) 84, a gathering May 28-30 of 80 Mennonite leaders from five Central American countries and Puerto Rico, Mexico and Belize, as well as church workers from the United States.

Desafio 84 had its roots in the Central American symposium sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section in October 1983 in Chicago. Central American Mennonites present at the Chicago meeting felt the need to discuss Anabaptist theology and Central America with the wider body of Mennonites in Central America.

The hope was to develop a joint strategy for mission and service in the region, while recognizing the diversity among the groups. The Desafio 84 planners aimed for the May meeting to help the church together confront the social problems of the region and be a forum for the church to seek "a third way."

Honduran Mennonite Ovidio Flores began the meeting with a poignant description of the current situation, noting that many of the problems are deeply imbedded in the history of the region. The present socioeconomic problems, Flores observed, are "the result of an unjust political-economic history, where a few are owners and lords of the wealth and the means of production, while the majority don't participate in the decisions that affect them."

How should the church in Central America respond? Jose M. Ortiz, professor in Hispanic studies at Goshen (Ind.) College, presented the "gospel of peace" as a response to a violent world. Using a study from Isaiah, Ortiz said the peacemaker must speak with the authority that comes from the Holy Spirit, to communicate to those in power a vision for a new direction.

*Abelino Pec, Kekchi Indian church leader from Guatemala, serves communion at Desafio 84.*

Luis Elier Rodriguez, executive secretary of the Puerto Rico Mennonite Church, talked of "the kingdom ethic in the witness of the church." He observed that the 16th-century Anabaptists came into conflict with government and church structures because of their obedience to Christ. They also established new social structures, such as having property in common, and emphasized non-resistance.

As Christians seek to follow Christ, Rodriguez said, they will live as their Lord in solidarity with the poor. The church will unmask the societal and cultural values that are in opposition to the kingdom. The new ethic will lead to new understandings of distribution of wealth, of property, of work and of human relations.

A litany of passages from the Old Testament prophets interspersed with brief descriptions of current equivalent situations underscored Gerald Schlabach's call for a prophetic testimony by the churches. Schlabach, MCC representative in Nicaragua, noted that God's intention is for the community of believers to be a light to the world.

The final speaker, Gilberto Flores, posed a question for the church in Central America: "Has our moment arrived?"

He answered affirmatively, saying that "our moment is in relation to the need for hope, a hope based in Christ and a hope that speaks to the present reality." He noted that "our opportunity is related to the urgent need for peace. At no time in the history of Central America has a recognition of our role as peace churches been so necessary."

"The peace we have to offer is an active peacemaking that has to do with justice, with removing the causes of war," Flores said.

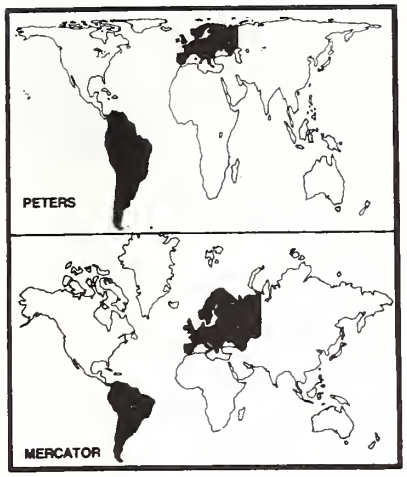
Flores said Anabaptist work in Central America should include evangelism and discipleship training, a redemptive service ministry and a clearly defined testimony that confronts society with its errors.

Flores also raised the issues of paternalism, talking of a church that "had imported clergy, foreign funding, foreign structures and agenda. Now theology is being produced, perhaps bitter and with a flavor of corn, but it's ours."

The meeting was a unique forum for the church leaders. Informal discussions and plenary sessions revealed differences over biblical interpretation and priorities in the ministry of the church, but there was general agreement that the conference provided a good opportunity for Mennonites on various sides of the divisions in Central America to discuss how the witness of the church could be faithful and consistent under opposing political systems. *Based on reports from Ron Flickinger*

**A great-grandnephew of Mohandas Gandhi** plans to start a World Peace University on an isolated ranch in central Oregon to promote the non-violent teachings of Gandhi. Yogesh Gandhi, 33, said he envisions a $22 million school with 1,500 students on a 101-acre campus near the tiny community of Mosier, Ore. The land is being donated by S. Richard Schneider, who already uses his 1,384-acre Sunrise Ranch for seminars and research on holistic health topics and alternatives to war. State and county zoning regulations that allow rural use of Schneider's ranch present a threat to Gandhi's proposal.

**For over 400 years** the world has been pictured in Mercator projection—a map devised by Gerhardus Mercator, a 16th-century Flemish geographer and cartographer—which projects the earth on a cylinder tangent to it at all points on the equator with the meridians and parallels forming a rectangular grid. Such maps are still used in thousands of classrooms and atlases. Now a new and more accurate map is available. It has been widely used in Europe for over a decade. It is the work of Arno Peters, a West German historian. His map shows the continents in their relative size and avoids placing the "developed nations" at the center of the world.




# Government curtails religious broadcasting in Botswana

Gaborone, Botswana (AIMM and MCC)—Among the diverse opportunities for ministry that have come to Mennonite personnel in Botswana during the past decade has been the unusual role of coordinating religious programming for the government broadcasting service known as Radio Botswana.

The Botswana Christian Council initiated this ministry by approaching the Mennonite team in that country, requesting someone qualified to coordinate and oversee the religious programming for broadcast purposes of the country's church community. Since the government radio was granting a generous 45 percent of total air time for free religious programming, this was a major opportunity for ministry.

Norman and Virginia Derstine of Harrisonburg, Va., were the first candidates for that opening. During their two-year stay in Botswana, Norman succeeded in structuring a variety of program formats, including a weekly period for the airing of church news and announcements, a request hour for religious music, the broadcasting of Sunday worship services and a Bible instruction hour.

One program feature which enjoyed immediate and broad success was a 10-minute devotional scheduled five mornings a week just before the first newscast of the day. It was a brief biblical meditation accompanied by appropriate music in which deliberate effort was made to apply scriptural truth to the everyday lives and problems of the Batswana listening audience.

Being scheduled early in the morning, the meditations reached most people as they waited for the first newscast and before they left home for the day's routine.

When the Derstines returned home in 1978, Henry and Naomi Unrau of Clearbrook, B.C., were recruited to continue the radio ministry. By this time it was known by the title "A Closer Look." The meditations were given first in English and then repeated in Setswana by an African pastor.

To insure the relevance of his themes, Henry began to solicit stories and experiences from listeners that illustrated issues and problems as they encountered them. There was much response to this appeal. Those whose stories or anecdotes were used on the air were sent a gift of a Setswana-language Bible.

Convinced that to maintain credibility in his biblical meditations he needed to address life as it is experienced by his listeners, Unrau sought to address questions of peace and justice as they related to the national life of his listeners. In one morning devotional he commented on the inequity of pending hikes in salaries for civil servants while ignoring the real need of those at the lower end of the economic spectrum. On another occasion he made reference to preferential treatment of offenders at the hands of the country's judicial system, which decreed lighter sentences for the influential and heavier ones for the common people for misdemeanors of essentially the same nature.

It was shortly after the airing of these two early morning meditations that Unrau was abruptly informed by his superiors that his program was suspended pending the search for an "acceptable format." Soon thereafter he was told that all religious broadcasting was suspended for purposes of a major evaluation.

There has been a good deal of reaction on the part of the listening public following this action by the government. The Botswana Christian Council, the Church Radio Committee and several church groups within the country have addressed inquiries to the government.

When queried by a member of Parliament, the Minister of Public Service and Information replied that the program had "strayed into secular matters." The minister went on to say that all religious programming was to undergo a thorough review.

A non-government newspaper editor commented in print that religion that divorces itself from social realities "is not only sterile but irrelevant." He went on to say that a pastor who had seen fit to attempt to grapple with "the sweaty issues of everyday life" was to be commended.

Unrau said that in his view "secular" issues cannot be separated from "religious" issues because the Lord Jesus never separated the two. As His ministry was to the whole man, so ought ours to be, he said.

The Unraus are sponsored by the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and are part of the joint Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission/Mennonite Central Committee team in Botswana which serves under a common administrative structure and identity known in the country as Mennonite Ministries.

Negotiations continue between representatives of the church community and the government authorities which seek to reinstate the popular program as well as the former gamut of religious programming.


## Have you considered Elim?

**Elim Bible Institute** in Altona, Southern Manitoba, offers a blend of Bible study, worship, community and service. Dedicated faculty and staff take a vital interest in every student.

For more information write:
Daniel Zehr, principal
Elim Bible Institute
Box 120
Altona, MB R0G 0B0
Phone (204) 324-8631.

**Mennonite Mutual Aid** will close the $100 deductible of its Medical Expense Sharing Plan to new applicants Aug. 1, according to Ron Litwiller, Mutual Aid Services vice president. The decision affects all individuals, families and businesses or institutions who wish to enroll in MESP. Existing business or institutional groups with the $100 deductible may continue to enroll new employees into the group.

**The South African Special Task Force** arrested and detained 37 people June 9 during a barbecue celebrating the release of 55 captives from the military detention camp at Cassinga, where they had been held "incommunicado" for six years. According to the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, most of those arrested were leaders of the South West Africa People's Organization based in Namibia. In violation of international norms of due process, says LCCRUL, the detainees are being held incommunicado, denied access to relatives, lawyers and friends.

**A "youth weekend"** was held June 1-3 at Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church. On Friday night (June 1) the youth group invited parents to a social event. The next morning the youth hosted an outdoor pancake breakfast and washed cars, which raised funds to support a new cabin at Camp Moose Lake, sponsor youth members to Great Trek 2 and contribute to a student fund. On Sunday morning the youth led the worship, which focused on Isaiah 6:1-8 and included readings, meditation, an item for the children, a drama and music. That evening the youth shared with the church about "witnessing."

## Mennonites dialogue with Jews on matters of faith

Salunga, Pa. (EMBMC)—A consultation on Jewish-Christian relations brought together 50 people here June 14-15.

Sponsored by the Shofar Committee of the home ministries department of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions, the consultation was the first of its kind for the board, because members of the Jewish community were invited to share their understanding of faith.

Papers and messages were presented by both Jews and Christians on the theme of covenant as it relates to salvation, Messiah, land and community. Respondents to the papers were David Miron of the Shofar Committee and Donald Jacobs, director of Mennonite Christian Leadership Foundation.

Presenting Jewish beliefs were Charles Mintz, rabbi, Temple Ohev Shalom, Harrisburg, Pa., Irwin Goldenberg, rabbi, Temple Beth Israel, York, Pa., Jack Fischel, professor of history, Millersville (Pa.) University, and Herbert Levine, professor of English, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pa.

Presenting Christian beliefs were Millard Lind, professor of Old Testament, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., Calvin Shenk, professor of church studies, Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., David Shenk, director of home ministries, Eastern Mennonite Board, and Roy Kreider, pastor, Immanuel House, Israel.

John Howard Yoder, ex-professor of theology at AMBS, pointed out that the church was originally part and parcel of the Jewish community and remained so until well into the second century. When Christians began to be accommodated into the Roman Empire in the third and fourth centuries, Christian evangelism lost its connection with the Torah, and the state of affairs hardened to the extent that Jewish and Christian communities saw each other as enemies, he said.

Christian participants at the consultation were impressed by the deep feelings Jewish people have for their homeland and the deep hurts they have suffered through the centuries at the hands of so-called Christian people.

Matters of theology were not easily resolved. As one of the respondents pointed out, the transforming agent for Jews is the Torah and its development, while Christians recognize Jesus Christ as the transforming agent.

There was considerable divergence on the subject of salvation. According to the Jewish speakers, salvation is "not from sin" but is a corporate saving in order to build the kingdom. For Christians, salvation emphasizes forgiveness of sins and includes love of God and love of neighbor.

Both faiths acknowledged that God works through suffering. For Jews suffering is redemptive and leads toward the day of the Messiah. Christians suffer as a result of their obedience to Christ.

Participants formed groups and drew up statements to use as guidelines in the ongoing witness among the Jewish people.

## Recovery of Hope helps troubled marriages

Newton, Kan. (MCC U.S.)—Divorce. You hadn't wanted to go that route. But after all the years of bad feelings, loneliness and fights, you felt you had no other choice.

Friends had long hinted as much. The TV dramas you watched, the books you read and the movies you had seen nudged and even pushed you in that direction. So, at last, you said to your mate, "I'm going to get a divorce."

Upon hearing of your plans, your pastor said, "Before you do, make one more try." The pastor, who had for so long shared your woe, told you about Recovery of Hope. It was a meeting with other couples who had hit the same wall of despair in their marriages. But instead of breaking up they had found a way to renew their lives together.

Would you spend three hours listening to the stories of three couples?

"What we are about to share with you is not easy," said John, who told of the rough road that he and Margaret had traveled. "We'd rather forget it. We only tell it with the hope that it may in some way help you."

Recovery of Hope has become the name for a plan of helping marriages that are in deep trouble. Begun in 1982 by Sheldon Louthan with the help of Floyd and Nelda Coleman, the program is now run by Prairie View Mental Health Center in Newton, Kan. Following Louthan's death in an airplane

*Nelda and Floyd Coleman, directors of Recovery of Hope*

*continued on next page*

**Canadian Justice Minister** Mark MacGuigan announced June 7 a $600,000 three-year federal program to improve mediation services in Canada. "Mediation serves a vital need in resolving family conflict, particularly where children are involved," MacGuigan said. "With the help of an objective mediator, family conflicts can be resolved without expensive, often bitter, court battles."

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crash last November, the Colemans became directors of this marriage rescue venture.

"When people lose hope for their marriages," says Nelda Coleman, "that's the point at which they get a divorce. People can go through a great deal as long as they have hope that things will be better."

In two years time, 60 couples have come to Recovery of Hope seminars, which are held every month. Two-thirds of these people who were on the brink of breaking up made an agreement to spend up to six months working out a plan that might restore their lives together. Of those who made such a commitment, two-thirds have mended their marriages or are working to heal their brokenness.

John and Margaret and the other couples told their stories that morning.

After the first hour, the couples seeking help wrote their responses to these questions: "What about your marriage relationship causes you the greatest despair? In what way are you contributing to the despair?"

The couples presenting their stories turned then, in the second hour, to the steps that brought renewal to them.

In response, participating couples wrote about the good that they could recall from a better time as they answered another set of queries: "What about your marriage gives you the greatest hope? What strengths do you see in your relationship when it is at its best? What can you do to improve your marriage?"

With the help of a counselor, each couple took the last hour of that morning to chart a course for their own recovery. That in itself was a miracle, a recovery of just enough hope that for the next months all threats of divorce would be set aside while working with others to heal a great distress. Each couple also chose a caring couple who would pray with them and support them during that hard time. *Maynard Shelly*

# COMMISSION ON EDUCATION

## Mission to marriages

Mennonite Marriage Encounter 1984-85

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| —Oct. 5-7 | Laurelville, Pa. | —Feb. 22-24 | Salem, Ore. |
| —Oct. 19-21 | Federal Way, Wash. | —March 9-11 | Marshall, Minn. |
| —Oct. 26-28 | Lima, Ohio | —March 15-17 | South Bend, Ind. |
| —Nov. 16-18 | Spruce Lake, Pa. | —March 22-24 | London, Ont. |
| —Jan. 11-13 | Peoria, Ill. | —April 19-21 | Spruce Lake, Pa |
| —Feb. 15-17 | Concordia, Kan. | — | Edmonton |

"MME has helped me to put biblical principles to work, especially in the area of expressing feelings."

"My only regret about MME is that we waited until our 22nd year to participate."

"This was one of the most beneficial investments of time and money my wife and I ever made."

## Meet Maynard Shelly,

COE's newly appointed General Editor. In addition to other occupations Maynard has pastored in several GC churhces, served as executive secretary of the GC Board of Education and Publication (now known as the Commission on Education) and was editor of *The Mennonite* for 10 years. Maynard has written articles, curriculum, study guides and books. His latest work, *Discovery*, a four-volume Bible survey course, will be published by Faith and Life Press later this year.

When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
Discretion will preserve you;
Understanding will keep you,

Proverbs 1:10-11 (NKJV)

## PROJECT TEACH 1985

Many congregations encourage and financially assist their teachers to attend Project Teach. Some have sponsored a teacher who has in turn helped and inspired others to try new methods.

Teachers of all levels, nursery to adult, will gain new insights and develop new skills in the week-long learning experience. Special classes can help superintendents, pastors and teachers of intergenerational classes. Teachers who want to bring persons with mental or physical handicaps into the regular classroom will also find help in another section. Foundation Series and Uniform Series will be used as the basic curriculums.

Project Teach 1985 will be held Jan. 20-25 at Swift Current, Sask. Price is $150 (Canadian) for room, board and tuition. Deadline for applications is Dec. 15. Call or write for more information.

**Commission on Education**
**General Conference Mennonite Church**
**722 Main Street, Box 347**
**Newton, Kansas 67114**

**316/283-5100**

**Project Soya** is an anti-hunger program sponsored by the United Methodist Minnesota annual conference which hopes that cookies will soon help alleviate hunger among India's malnourished millions. Just two to four of the cookies added to the diet of an undernourished Indian child could give him adequate nutrition, according to Robert Nave, who for 27 years has worked in India with the United Methodist Church.

**The Grace Chinese Mennonite Church** in Vancouver purchased a building from the Vietnamese Chinese Assembly. The price for the building in the center of Vancouver was $100,000. The congregation raised $20,000 and received a grant and loan of $10,000 each from the province and a $65,000 loan from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. After renovating the building, the congregation began worship services there in early June.

**Scottish evangelists** went to Kenya in the 19th century and helped to found what is now the Presbyterian Church in East Africa. To return the favor, the African church is now raising funds to send missionaries to Scotland. The news service of the All Africa Conference of Churches said the PCEA has concluded that "there were many people in Scotland who needed spiritual revival." It said the evangelistic program was envisioned as "a show of fellowship with the Scottish Christians."

# RECORD

## workers

*Dirkses*

*Rieses*

*Franzes*

*Thompsons*

*Henry* and *Tina (Weier) Dirks*, Bethany Church, Virgil, Ont., returned to North America June 9 for a two-month assignment before returning to their Commission on Overseas Mission/Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission assignment in Zaire. Henry will continue constructing and establishing a printing plant for the Kasai Literature Program. Tina will resume her responsibilities in typesetting and proofreading for the Kasai Literature Program.

*Peter* and *Annie (Rempel) Falk*, Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., COM/AIMM missionaries, will be on a two-month North America assignment this summer. Peter is a professor at the Institut Superieur de Theology del Kinshasa. He is working on the French manuscript of his book *The Growth of the Church in Africa*. He also assists in the ministries of the Mennonite churches in Kinshasa. Annie is director of the women's school of ISTK. She teaches Bible, Christian education and home economics.

*Werner* and *Marlene Franz* have returned to Paraguay, where Werner will become professor of Bible and theology at the Evangelical Mennonite Center of Theology of Asunción. He recently received a Master of Divinity degree from AMBS. They are originally from the Neuland Colony in Paraguay.

*David Janzen*, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., retired from prison chaplaincy at the Niagara Detention Centre, Thorold, Ont., having served there since 1973. Previously he served as pastor of Niagara United Mennonite Church and on the faculty of CMBC.

*Virgil Peters*, Mt. Angel, Ore., has been invited by the Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hwalien, Taiwan, to help in family practice and community health services while several doctors are on summer vacations. Peters served with COM in Taiwan from 1964-67 and made summer fill-in trips in 1971 and 1976.

*Dennis* and *Shirley Ries*, Salem Church, Freeman, S.D., and Bethesda Church, Henderson, Neb., will complete their COM/AIMM assignment in Kalonda, Zaire, at the end of the summer. Dennis has been medical director of the Mennonite Community of Zaire and a doctor at Kalonda Hospital. Shirley has been teaching their children and operating the short-wave radio.

*Rodney Sawatsky* has been reappointed academic dean at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ont. He has served in that position since 1974.

*Ron Sawatzky*, Bethlehem Church, Bloomfield, Mont., left his COM/AIMM assignment in Botswana June 6. He taught mathematics at the University of Botswana but will assume the position of lecturer at the new teachers' training college in Molepolole this fall.

*Joleen Siebert*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., returned to Orange Cove, Calif., May 28 after a 10-month assignment as an overseas mission volunteer teacher at Hwalien Christian School in Taiwan.

*Arnold* and *Marjorie (Wright) Thompson*, COM missionaries in Taiwan, will be on leave in North America this summer. Arnold is director of community health and general practice at Mennonite Christian Hospital in Hwalien.

# LETTERS

## Why does God charge us?

Re: "A Freeing Lifestyle" (editorial, June 5 issue), for me a freeing lifestyle is preceded by a knowledge of the truth. The truth is that the Christian God is responsible for the evil in this creation.

This leaves me free of the guilt of original sin and allows me to use my free moral agency to work for a livable world here and now. I do not have to speculate about the hereafter or get saved to insure that I will not burn in hell for ever and ever.

The question is not "Why did God permit evil in his creation?" The question is "Why has God charged his creatures with the evil in his creation?" *Orville Rutschman, Box 117, Hesston, KS 67062*

June 14

## Raises awareness

Thank you for printing the article on homosexuality (June 5 issue, p. 272). When you're not personally involved in a particular situation, it is easy to think in terms of black and white. I've never thought of the pain and hurt there would be in a situation as described in the article.

We need our awareness raised and this article definitely did that. *Adell Nickel, 3208 S. Kiwanis, #2, Sioux Falls, SD 57105*

June 19

## Figured out other things

Thank you for publishing "God's Grace and My Familiar Stranger" (June 5 issue). It has helped me figure out some things not really related to homosexuality.

In heaven, when we are finally free of our sinful natures, we can be totally open and honest and there will be no harm done by speaking out. But now there is or could be. We Mennonites know so many other Mennonites; therefore, I'd like to remain *anonymous.*

June 19

## Salary scales

Why is the salary scale at Prairie View so much higher than that at Bethel College? *Arnold M. Wedel, 2427 College Ave., North Newton, KS 67117*

June 19

*Editor's note: Normally we might not have published this letter. It speaks to two specific institutions. But Arnold raises a question most of us are too private about in churches and church institutions. Why is that so? Hopefully some readers can help us discuss the larger question raised here.*

## A modest peace proposal

Rarely does one find an idea so attractive in its beauty, so compelling in its simplicity and so piercing in its truth. Yet I was surprised that it should come to me, or to any Christian, as a new thought.

I greet my readers in the name of Jesus Christ, hope of the world and prince of peace, whom we praise with our lips and pray to bless with our lives. I invite you to listen as you read, considering whether the Spirit of God may be speaking in your heart.

There is a great longing in the church around the world for that unity of the human family which Jesus promised. Many godly men and women have devoted and are devoting heroic efforts and fervent prayers toward the unity of the church of Jesus Christ. They have addressed difficult questions of baptism, eucharist, ministry and polity. Some progress has been made, but the world still sees a divided body when it looks toward the church. Christ's prayer "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me" still waits to be answered.

What might the church do to bear unmistakable witness to the love of God in Jesus Christ, in a manner at once relevant to our times and faithful to the received tradition? Here is a modest proposal: *Let the Christians of the world agree that they will not kill each other.*

Yes, there is so much more that we would like to do. This is so elementary—at first thought almost embarrassing in its simplicity—but at the same time compelling. Because so far in the history of the Christian movement, it has not been done. The Christians of the world have not agreed that they will not kill each other. Not in confession and certainly not in practice—with the notable exception of the first three centuries of Christian history.

A worldwide conference of churches could be called to explore the implications and announce the adoption of this confession of Christian love and unity. Elected representatives of the church of the East and the West, the North and the South, could bear the resolutions of their respective communions to a common location such as Rome or San Salvador, where they would unite in agreement that, come what may, they will not kill each other. Press coverage would probably not be difficult to secure, since there would be a certain inherent newsworthiness in the event.

I claim no originality for this proposal. It has been raised previously. I only claim to hear the voice of God in it and confess that the Holy Spirit does not allow me to be silent about an action so attuned to the mind of Christ.

What, I wonder, would you be willing to do toward the implementation of this modest proposal for Christian unity? Let the church hear God's voice. *Let the Christians of the world agree that they will not kill each other. John Stoner, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501*

June 21

*Reprinted from* One World, *a monthly magazine of the World Council of Churches, published by the Communication Department of the WCC, 150 route do Ferney, Box 66, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.*

*John Stoner is executive secretary of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section.*

## Thanks to MVS

This is my "thank you" to all of you who are workers and supporters of Mennonite Voluntary Service. I appreciate a thousandfold the chance given me of working in the program and living among some of the finest young people I've ever known. I appreciate all of them.

My horizons have been immeasurably broadened as I encountered the inner-city poor, the homeless, the drug addicted, the homosexuals, the street people. Their plight seems astronomical. From degradation to demeaning injustices of their world they also must cope with inner-city dirt that, like chocolate, can be stripped off most anywhere you look. Recovery from these ills can be painfully slow if not non-existent.

I hope that you, as Mennonites, recognize the goodness of your fellow travelers, other Mennonites. If not, don't tell me. I *know* that saints and near saints live among you.

Bless you all and again thanks for everything—the retreats especially. You've given me two years that were truly a great learning and loving experience. I care. *Gwen Norton, 712 James St., St. James, MO 65559*

June 24

# Choosing a new pastor in Paz del Chaco

*Angela Rempel*

It was obviously a special day in the Indian settlement of Paz del Chaco, Paraguay. The dirt road leading to the church was full of people. Some walked while others rode in horse-drawn wagons. They entered the wood frame church building, more than filling it.

Windows were open and some people sat on the window ledges while others looked in from outside. The men sat on one side of the sanctuary and the women on the other.

The special event that day was the choosing of a new pastor. But before the actual selection began, a long inspirational service took place. Messages and greetings were given by visiting church leaders and officers representing the Indian, Spanish and German Mennonite churches of Paraguay. North American Mennonites were represented by Glendon Klaassen and Larry Tschetter from the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission. The Lengua Indian language was used, along with translations as needed.

*Pedro Antonio (left), who had served the growing Indian congregation, felt he needed more time for his farming. He was glad to pass the charge over to Julio as the new pastor.*

Music played an important part in the service. In addition to enthusiastic congregational singing, five different choirs presented special music. Before each choir sang, someone prayed, asking God's blessing on the music. Guitars, harps, drums and cymbals accompanied the singing.

Pedro Antonio had been the pastor of the growing Indian church. But he felt he could not continue because he needed to devote more time to farming. Like others in Paz del Chaco, he raised cotton and peanuts.

Located about 10 kilometers from Gruenau in the South Menno Colony, this is one of several settlements which the German Mennonites living in Paraguay have helped establish for the Indians, who lead a nomadic lifestyle. In addition to starting schools and medical clinics, the German Mennonites have begun churches in the settlements.

The church in Paz del Chaco began only three years ago. Already about 300 Lengua Indians have responded to the gospel and become part of that congregation. In other settlements, the Germans started three more large Indian congregations and several preaching points.

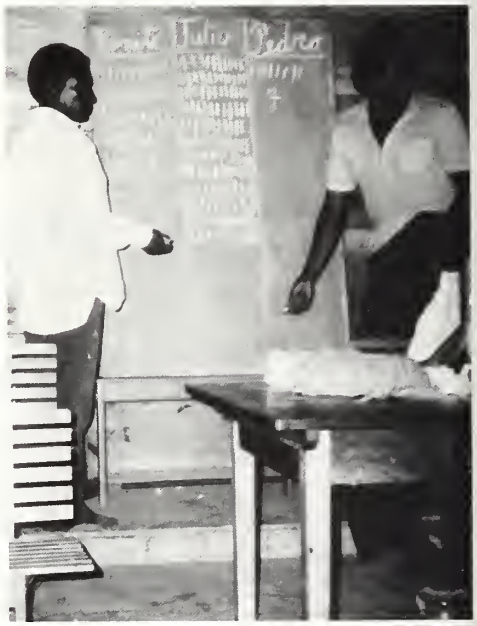
The time had come to carefully choose a new leader for the church in Paz del Chaco—someone who could give more time to lead the congregation and teach the new believers. Finally, after the music, messages and greetings, a chalkboard was placed on the platform. The names of three candidates were on it. Pedro's name was still one of them, along with the names of two other men from the local congregation, Julio and Benite. Church leaders and two secretaries were at the front.

Row by row, beginning with the men, all adult members rose, walked to the front and spoke aloud the name of the man he or she wanted as the next pastor. One of the two secretaries then placed a straight mark on the chalkboard under the name of the man mentioned. The election was conducted openly, with the participation of the entire congregation.

Church leaders carefully counted the votes although it was obvious that Julio had by far the most votes. Eight people voted for Pedro. It was officially announced that Julio had received the most votes and that he was now the new pastor.

Pedro gave some final words, Julio accepted the new responsibility, and God's blessing was asked for the new pastor.

People visited after the service, congratulating Julio and wishing him God's blessings. When the wooden windows were closed, the people knew it was time to leave. Pastoral responsibilities had been smoothly passed to another and they knew that the work of building Christ's church would continue.



*As the people came forward to call out the name of one of the candidates for pastor, a secretary put a straight chalk mark under the name of that person.*

*Angela Rempel, 1701 W. 4th St., Newton, KS 67114, is a homemaker and freelance writer. She and her husband, Erwin, served as missionaries in Brazil from 1975-82 under the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission.*

## 25th anniversary

**Akron Mennonite Church** will celebrate its 25th anniversary **Sept. 15-16.** The weekend activities will include music, sharing by former pastors, reflections from former and long-term members and an ice cream social. Don Jacobs is the keynote speaker. All former members are invited and urged to attend. Write to your friends or the Akron Mennnonite Church office, Box 208, Akron, PA 17501-0208, which will coordinate housing.

# Seeds of hope in Northern Ireland

*Christoph Bals*

The tragic stories bring the conflict in Northern Ireland to the attention of the outside world again and again. After 14 years "the troubles," as the conflict is euphemistically referred to, are often ignored or dismissed as a hopeless religious war. Although in reality it cannot be called merely a religious war, it can indeed seem hopeless. It has been impossible to build a Northern Irish government where representatives of both the Protestant Loyalist (to British rule) and Catholic Irish Nationalist populations can successfully work together to find possible solutions. The roots of the struggle simply run too deep. Responsibility for Northern Ireland's politics rests in the hands of a Northern Irish Minister, a position created by the British government in 1972.

Separation of the population runs along the sectarian lines established centuries ago, when English and Scottish Protestants immigrated to a land populated primarily by Irish Catholics. Despite the oppression of the Catholic population over the years, two different cultures have developed side by side. With the beginning of the present conflict, Protestants and Catholics live in separate villages or segregated ghettos. Although officially illegal, studies reveal discrimination and preferential treatment in job hiring along sectarian lines.

Ninety-nine percent of the children in Northern Ireland go to pure Catholic or Protestant schools, and many have never been outside their ghettos. In the harbor city of Belfast, many children have never seen the sea or spoken with a person of another religion.

Many people in Northern Ireland are trying to break through these walls of prejudice and ignorance. Since 1972 a great number of hopes have been awakened by the ecumenical initiative All Children Together (ACT). In 1981 ACT founded Lagan College, a mixed denomination secondary school. Located in Belfast, Lagan College is the only secondary school in Northern Ireland attended by both Protestant and Catholic children. "The children should not only learn with each other but from one another with a spirit of mutual respect," is one of the founding philosophies.

When the idea of this non-sectarian school was born in 1978 it had seemingly little chance of success, according to Sister Anna, leader of ACT. "At the beginning we had no money, no personnel, not even a schoolhouse," says Sister Anna. "But then donations began to come from all over Europe, and parents from Belfast also began to express interest. I remember one who said to me, 'Even if my child is the only student, sign him up.' " If this pilot project reaches its goals, there is a good chance similar schools will be founded throughout Northern Ireland.

*Headmistress Sheila Greenfield stands with students at Lagan College, Belfast, on Sept. 1, 1981, during an opening day program.*

"Only the financial situation is difficult," continues Sister Anna, "especially for the children from the poor ghettos of Belfast, as a large portion of the running costs must be carried by parents. State support for the school won't be available until at least 300 pupils are enrolled, which will be in October of this year or in 1985. Until then we must raise $750,000 from sources outside the school."

For Sister Anna, Lagan College is more than a project. While in Oxford a few years ealier, she met Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who was making preparations for four Catholic nuns to work in Belfast. Mother Teresa suggested four Anglican nuns should join them as a living symbol of reconciliation. Sister Anna was one of those Anglican nuns. Today she is the power behind the Lagan College initiative.

In 1981 an opinion poll in the *Sunday Times* of London showed that 75 percent of Protestant and 66 percent of Catholic parents would prefer to send their children to a non-sectarian school. Many other surveys support these figures. Popular reaction to Lagan College has been positive. Over 300 applications were received for two full-time teaching positions, and for the third year running many prospective students had to be turned away for lack of space. If the British government hasn't been supportive, at least it has not stood in the way.

Supporters of Lagan College and similar initiatives are discouraged that the press reports mainly about bomb attacks and hopelessness in Northern Ireland but rarely about the many attempts to resolve the problems. "Therefore, we're thankful for every newspaper article, each youth group and every prayer through which we receive support," says Sister Anna. "Otherwise, where should we get the courage to continue fighting this spiral of violence that's been going on for more than 14 years?"

*This article was submitted to us by Dody Riggs, an American living in Görresstrasse 33, 800 München 40, West Germany, and a member of the Lagan College "circle of friends."*

# Is this justice?

*Chuck Colson*

In the rush of last yearend's headlines appeared one of the most bizarre stories of 1983, the proposed castration of three South Carolina rapists. That story was immediately followed by one of the most poignant, Pope John Paul's visit to his would-be assassin in a Rome prison.

This unlikely pair of news accounts provided an ironic commentary on our faith and culture, along with some disturbing insights.

The first began in an Anderson, S.C., courtroom. In hopes of receiving a lenient sentence, three young men charged with a brutal rape confessed.

But Judge Victor C. Pyle was in no mood for mercy. Thirty years was the sentence, he announced, unless—the young men held their breath—unless the defendants submit to castration.

The crack of the judge's gavel sent shockwaves across the land. Hoards of reporters descended on the sleepy southern town to cover the defendants' agonizing choice. One immediately chose castration but asked for more time after consulting his wife. As of this writing (February), all three were still deliberating.

Politicians wasted no time in fanning the flames. One state representative proposed bills to televise electrocutions, bring back public hangings and castrate all rapists. "Treat them like animals," he thundered, "so the other animals will understand." Supporters produced referendum petitions signed by thousands.

The concept of corporal punishment is not new. It is common in Moslem countries, where thieves simply have their hands chopped off in public—a practice we in the civilized West have always found revolting.

But this is not Saudi Arabia. It's South Carolina, the buckle of the Bible Belt, where most folks go to church and preachers preach Christ crucified. South Carolina proposing mandatory mutilation?

It would be hard to argue a biblical basis. The Old Testament "eye for an eye" was meant as a restraint on revenge. In the New Testament, Jesus rebuffed Peter for slicing off the centurion's ear, and Paul described the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Bible as a whole emphasizes the dignity of the individual, who is created in the image of God.

Castration raises a host of other questions. Doctors have voiced ethical concerns. Who does it? What about the psychological damage? Is the purpose of law punishment or behavior modification? Timely questions for 1984.

*Pope John Paul II talks with Mehmet Ali Agca in a Rome prison on Dec. 27, 1983.*

The practical question is whether castration works. The evidence is that it may not destroy the sex drive. Besides, most experts believe rape is a crime of violence rather than sexual passion. Does Judge Pyle really want to release confessed rapists who may, castrated or not, still attack people? I don't.

But the most disturbing point in this case centers on public reaction. Many people applauded the representative's statement about "animals." So pervasive is the fear of crime, we'll do almost anything against those who perpetrate it, pay any price for the illusion of safety.

That's the real danger. For while I doubt that castration will actually become South Carolina law, the passionate reaction reveals the depth of fear and frustration which grips us. And when faced with the choice between liberty and order, fear-ridden people through the years have chosen order. Germans did so in the early '30s—Hitler, remember, enjoyed overwhelming public support for ridding the streets of criminals. (Jewish merchants came next.)

That couldn't happen here, you say. But the South Carolina case reminds us how much hatred smolders near the surface of the human soul. And individual liberty can survive only as long as those passions are restrained.

There is another way. We saw it in the remarkable story of Pope John Paul's visit to Rome's Rabbibia Prison on Dec. 27, 1983. Millions around the world watched TV coverage of John Paul's meeting with Mehmet Ali Agca, the 25-year-old Turk who only two years earlier had pumped several bullets into the pontiff's stomach.

The white-robed pope and jean-clad terrorist huddled in Agca's stark cell for 20 minutes, talking in low voices that could not be overheard. When he emerged, John Paul explained, "I spoke to a brother whom I have pardoned . . . and the Lord gave us the grace to meet each other as men and as brothers."

Agca, of course, is a Moslem. The Moslem world, which doesn't know Christ's forgiveness, was stunned. The Turkish press called the pope's action "shocking."

So while Bible Belt Christians were clamoring for Moslem justice, the bishop of Rome was witnessing Christian love to the Moslem world.

For me this spine-tingling scene again affirmed how radically different the gospel is from the world's ways. I could only hope my brothers and sisters in South Carolina were also watching.

John Paul's visit to that Rome prison was not only the embodiment of the gospel. Coming on the heels of the ugly story from South Carolina, it should cause us to reflect on the lessons of history and remember that the price of appeasing our passions for revenge may well be the loss of our freedoms.

*Reprinted by permission from* Jubilee, *February 1984, monthly newsletter of Prison Fellowship. Chuck Colson is overall founder of Prison Fellowship, Box 17500, Washington, DC 20041.*

# MEDITATION

## God leads his children

As the day for receiving Social Security gets closer, I've been thinking about the way God has led me in my Christian pilgrimage. He leads each of us differently, but for me it has been through his Word. There have been many times I could not doubt that God was speaking to me.

Since I was a child I wanted to be a missionary. But it wasn't until after Bible school that God definitely spoke. I was working in a city rescue mission. The situation was difficult. One day while I was reading Hebrews 11:8, God spoke to me, "By faith Abraham . . . obeyed . . . and went out." Also Psalm 2:8, "Ask of me and I will give the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." I realized I needed to ask for that very thing. Through his word he was telling me that he wanted me to obey and to ask for the lost world.

About a week later at the mission when I was wondering about my work there, the Lord answered me from Micah 2:10, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest." I knew that I could not continue in that situation and left. When I left, other doors began to open.

I was accepted by the Congo Inland Mission (now the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission) for overseas service. Before I could go overseas the board asked me to get further training. I chose nursing. The promise I stood upon during my nurses' training days was 1 Chronicles 28:20, "Be strong and of good courage and do it. Fear not nor be dismayed, for the Lord God will be with thee. He will not fail thee nor forsake thee until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord."

He doesn't lead everyone in the same way. Sometimes he tests our faith to see if we really mean what we say. But as I look over my life I know he does not fail. I've lived through two revolutions in Zaire (formerly the Belgian Congo) and he hasn't failed me. He has a plan for our lives. When we search in prayer for that plan, he reveals it to us one step at a time. He wants our trust that he does all things well.

In 27 years as missionaries in Zaire my husband and I have seen many ways in which the Lord has led our lives. Because of a health problem we are unable to return to the mission field now, but God is still leading.

Just the other night I was lying awake. My mind was going over our present situation. I was wondering what the Lord had in store for us. The Lord seemed to nudge me and remind me of Psalm 27:14, "Wait for the Lord. Be strong and let your heart take courage. Yes, wait for the Lord." Because we cannot go back to Africa on an extended basis we wonder. But God knows what he has for us to do. We are waiting. Sometimes a little impatiently, but nonetheless courageously waiting.

How often the Lord has had to remind me to wait and not get in a hurry. He's fixing things up and will give us something beautiful to do because it's from him. But if we get in a hurry and take second best it won't be nearly as good. God only wants the best for each of his children, and in waiting on his timing that is what he will give us. He's never late but always on time.

So you who are reading this and wondering what God has in store for you, take courage, he will not forsake you. Trust him, he will lead you.

*Eudene E. Keidel*

# CONTENTS

It is summer and many are on vacation. Our faith goes with us wherever we are.

This issue raises some tough questions. They should keep you from being bored.

We also share some beautiful stories from at home and abroad. Our God never leaves himself without a witness even in the most difficult situations.

May his Spirit help us to accept challenges and to rejoice in the hope he spreads among us and around us.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# editorial

## *Can we risk changes?*

They were shocking words. "The United States is the first country in history where more people die from overeating than from malnourishment." I looked at my overhang at the belt. It was time to change.

I write this three months after I made that resolve and joined a fitness club. I have lost 30 pounds, put in longer work days and feel better all around. Some clothes at the back of the closet are comfortable again. As a bonus, my jogging times often become beautiful times of meditation.

No, I'm not telling you to lose weight. This change was my need, and God has given grace to do something about it. In the process I am learning some things about change and risk. They're not new, but we easily forget them.

Something in us loves sameness and fights change. Christians love Bible verses like "For I the Lord do not change . . ." (Malachi 3:6a), "The Lord . . . will not change his mind . . ." (Hebrews 7:21) and "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). We feel security in steadfastness.

There is also within us a drive for change with creative experiences and insights. It too is biblical. ". . . we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be. . ." (1 John 3:2a). "And we all . . . are being changed . . . from one degree of glory to another . . . this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

At times it almost paralyzes us. We want to be the same and we want to change. We need stability and we need creativity.

How can I change from lots of ice cream to lots of tomato juice? How can white Mennonites learn to love blacks? How can our churches use computers without bowing down to technology? How can we be people of principle and of compassion?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in "Meditations on Psalm 119" (*Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. IV) says that when God's Word opened up to him the first time he became a sojourner on earth. He realized we are God's guests and need to live as "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2:11).

Sojourners or pilgrims cannot rest secure in their attainments. They are people living on the edge of expectation. Like Paul they forget what lies behind and eagerly press forward (Philippians 3:13-14).

As long as we have life and breath, God's Spirit dynamically urges us closer to the lifestyle and attitude of Jesus Christ.

A changing pilgrim life has to do with risk. Too much change at too fast a pace can traumatize people.

Much stress comes from the known giving way to the unknown, the tried and true yielding to the unpredictable. Change seems like a loss of self-continuity and a loss of meaning. The child who risks letting go of parents' hands to walk on its own can never again be quite the same. Life ahead is new life. And there is no gain without pain.

Perhaps the greatest fear of change for believers is that we will become somebody less than we were. We might change from naive but sincere believers into more informed but skeptical believers. Such risk becomes frightening.

It is not so obvious, even to believers, that status quo Christianity is impossible. We grow or we stagnate. To maintain what we think we know means to shut our eyes to needs we have never felt and to close our minds to ideas we have never had. Our ministry becomes narrowed to others who are as we are and think as we think. This is one of the curses of today's church.

How can we risk change without losing ourselves?

I am convinced that our greatest protection is in the overarching goals for our lives. When our aim is to serve the Lord with heart, soul, mind and strength (costly discipleship), there is no ideology or place to fear. We can risk meeting, hearing and sharing because his Spirit is with us even in the fiery furnaces.

Change for change alone is vanity and a form of cheap grace. It can make us conceited, vain and brings spiritual death. This is one of the plagues in today's church.

A risk for Christ can cost our lives. But that brings the gain of being with him.

To grow in Christ is to change. To change is to risk.

All believers concerned to attain the goal of the onward call in Christ Jesus must cope with God's Spirit urging them to take risks for change. God's grace has blessed my risk about improving my health. I'm glad I made that change and pray for courage to risk other changes. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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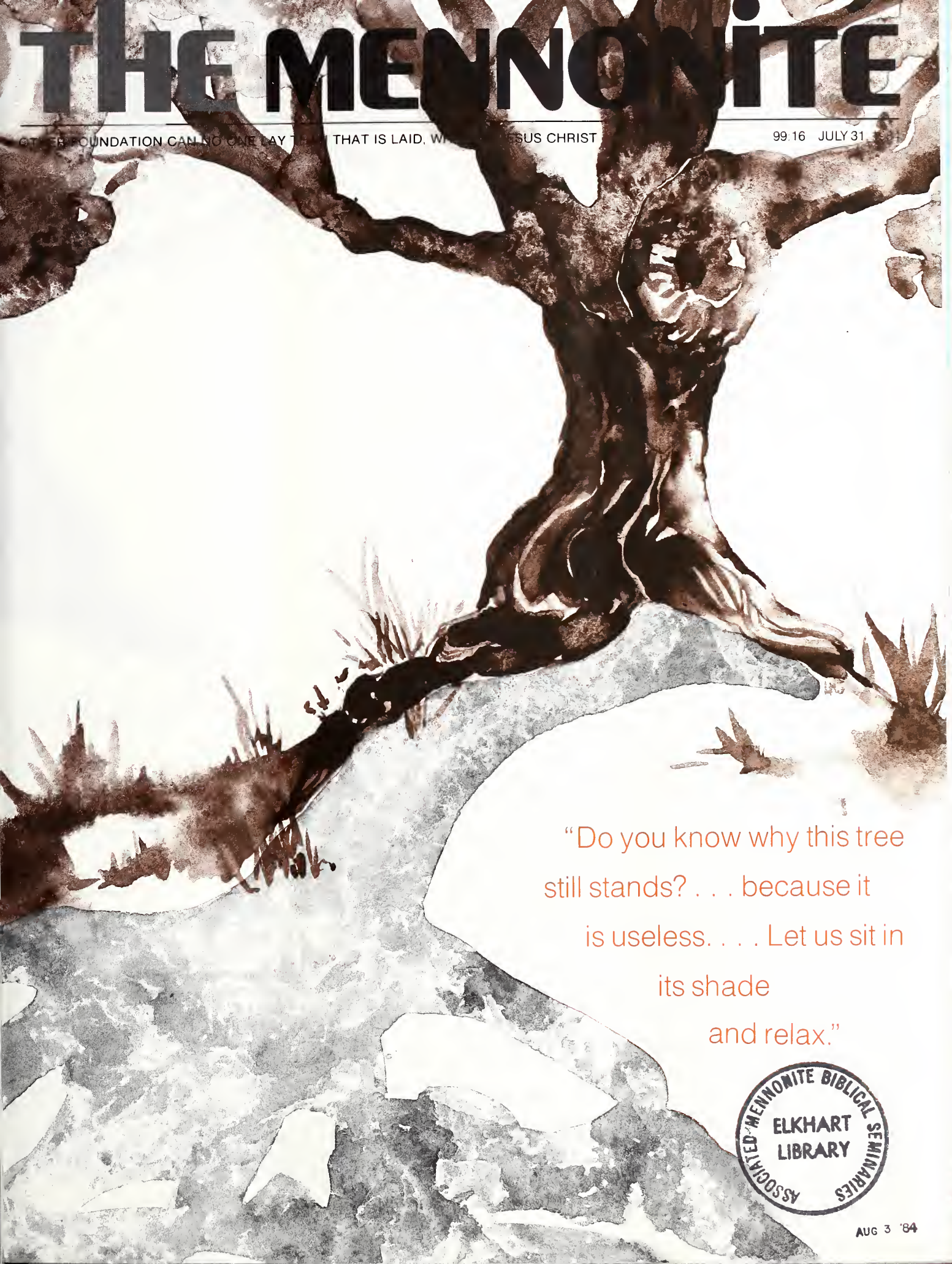

"Do you know why this tree still stands? . . . because it is useless. . . . Let us sit in its shade and relax."

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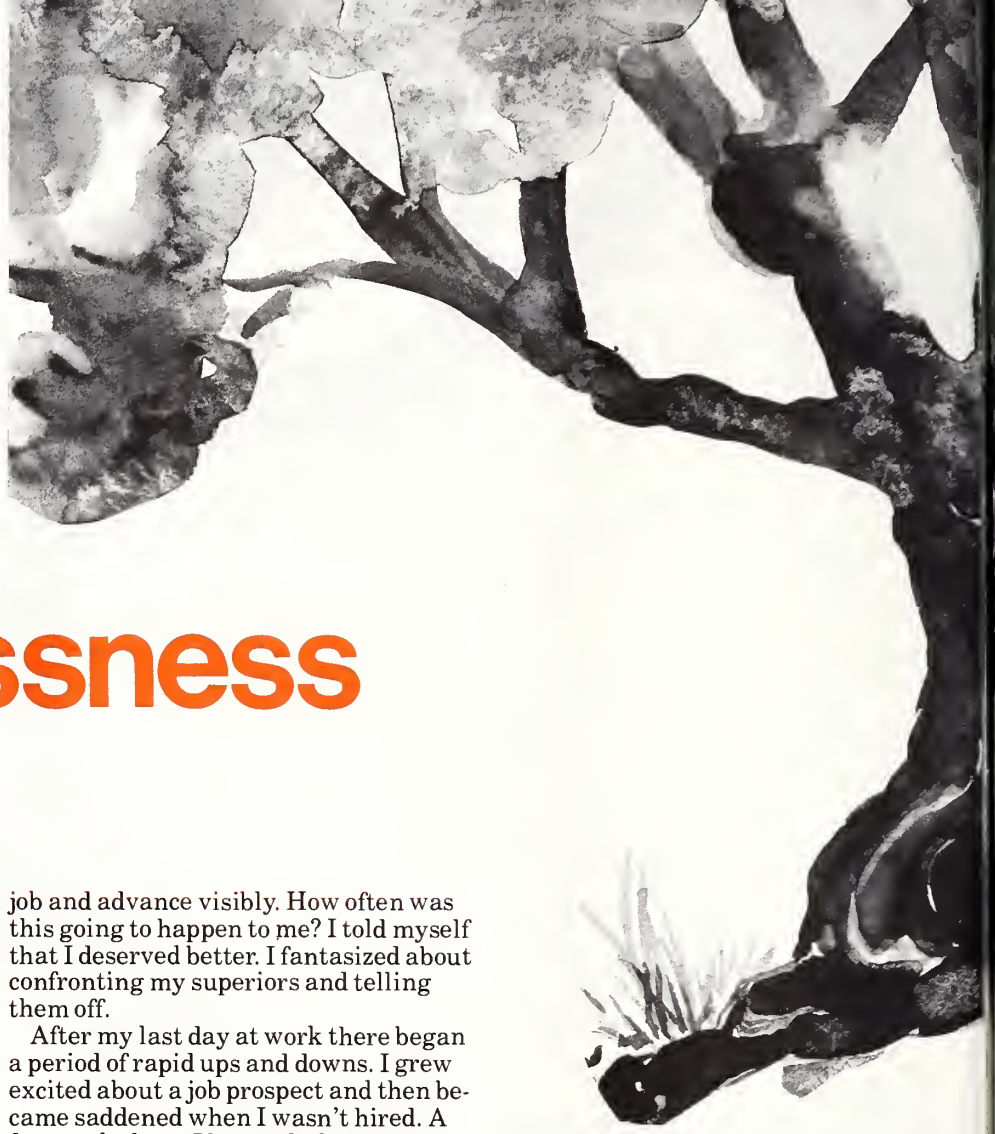
# The proper regard of uselessness



*Dave Redmon*

". . . How dull it is to pause,
To make an end,
To rust unburnished,
Not to shine in use,
As though to breathe were life. . . ."

When I was a youth I committed to memory these lines from Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Ulysses." Even though he wrote them a century ago, they capture the essence of modern people, of progress and productivity, of being useful.

I recently came through a period of unemployment, the third such episode in my life and probably not the last. Joblessness and its relative, underemployment, strike all kinds of people, even engineers and accountants. When it happens to productive people it shakes the foundations of their belief.

I had been a writer and editor for 15 years. Much of my identity was in my work, my profession. Most of the time it was invigorating and I could think of nothing else I wanted more. But my most recent job as a university science writer had ended when the funding expired. In three years I had established a good track record. Now my familiar world was coming to an end. Words began to fail altogether. Relationships took on new overtones. Soon, it seemed, people shied away from me and I avoided most of them. They had a purpose, I no longer did.

Anxiety had set in months before the last day at work. I was angry that I had fallen once again into joblessness. I was ashamed that I could not seem to hold a job and advance visibly. How often was this going to happen to me? I told myself that I deserved better. I fantasized about confronting my superiors and telling them off.

After my last day at work there began a period of rapid ups and downs. I grew excited about a job prospect and then became saddened when I wasn't hired. A few weeks later I learned of an opportunity to buy a franchise and open a small retail store. After investing much time and enthusiasm in this, the deal fell through before it was born. I was disappointed but relieved of taking a financial and emotional risk. The future looked grim.

It wasn't long before I was wallowing in boredom, resentment and depression. "Use it or lose it," goes the saying. I was becoming more bent and rusty by the day. I felt cast aside, useless, unproductive. These emotions are so harmful that even retirees can find it difficult to stay healthy, to say nothing of me, idled in the prime of life. My best hope was to "hang in there" until things improved.

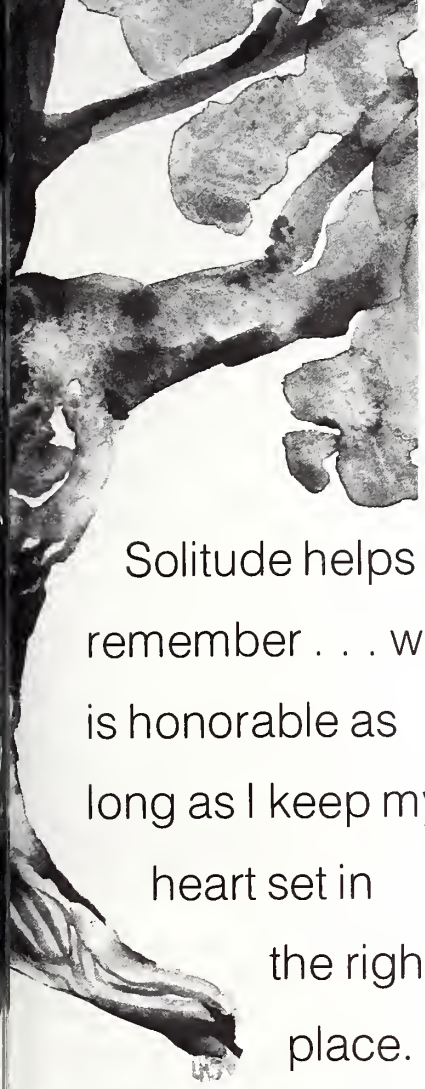
Allowing one's personal worth to be defined even partly by the job market is a treacherous proposition. With the nation's jobless rate running near 10 percent (as much as 50 percent in some groups), I caught a glimpse of the poisoning effect this frozen anger, this depression, exerts on our society.

**Useless tree.** There is a story about a carpenter and his apprentice. One hot day they saw a magnificent oak tree in the distance. As they neared the tree, the carpenter asked his apprentice, "Do you know why this tree still stands?"

"No, why?"

"Because it is useless," said the carpenter. "If it had been a useful tree it would have been cut down years ago and its long, straight lumber made into tables and chairs. But since it was twisted and gnarled, it could grow tall and beautiful. Let's sit in its shade and relax."

**Avoided pain.** I was convinced that to avoid serious depression I had to avoid feelings of powerlessness and pain. I had to remain efficient. I had to keep busy. There was the ongoing (and fruitless) job search and an occasional interview. "Sorry, but you're overqualified," most employers told me. In between there were fix-it projects around the house and two old cars to keep running. My wife still held her job, but we were forced to tighten our belts. Besides, I did not want to confront the abyss of losing control. "I'm not broken but I'm badly bent," I told my friends. Any diversion would do, even the radio. I lost the commonsense ability to budget my time. My anger



Solitude helps me remember . . . work is honorable as long as I keep my heart set in the right place.

flared at the slightest provocation.

I was scattered all over the place. There seemed to be no place I could feel at home. Seldom did I trust the only thing I really had—the moment at hand.

Unfortunately, my wife was exposed to much of this abuse simply because she was closest. She enjoyed her teaching and research but could not avoid the strain of my uncertainty. One day I took her to the doctor for a heart irregularity she has suffered periodically since childhood. The cardiologist found nothing wrong with her but, driving home, I could not get enough air to breathe, so great was my guilt and anxiety.

I was strong and experienced. I had been through this before. "This too shall pass," I told myself. I would be tough and persistent.

But I began to wonder. Could my strength be my stumbling block? My pride in refraining from work that was less honorable than being a writer? Could I be so distracted by keeping busy and other "noise" that I was deaf to any other possibilities?

**Three joys remained.** I had been experiencing joy in three activities. The first was my family, especially playing with my toddler son. Watching him eat a banana or master a new word are wonders to behold. I know not only self-discipline but the joy of believing in someone and something beyond myself. He reinforces what Jesus said about only little children entering the kingdom of God.

The second activity was participating in my church fellowship. I am not by nature religious. Part of my rebellion was my fear of being tamed, of being duped. I did not see that to hear is to obey. I've never been much of a joiner either, but I know that in community people can learn and take strength from each other. When church leaders asked me to take on some responsibilities, I accepted.

The third activity that kept me bouyant was participating in my local Toastmasters Club. I have stuttered since childhood, so standing up to speak was an exercise in mastering old fears. I get a real kick out of doing something I had always thought impossible.

There were times when I nearly withdrew from all these support systems. Fortunately I did not. I am convinced that participating helped keep me flexible and self-confident.

**Activity and solitude.** I knew I was near the end of my rope. Following intuition, I escaped one weekend to a contemplative center. This one was the Manna House of Prayer operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph in Concordia, Kan. There I heard some old advice that suddenly made sense. Activity must be balanced by inactivity—staring at my navel, if you will. Some call it solitude, some call it prayer. Others call it yoga, contemplation, relaxation. Whatever the name, it is a time-out to listen to the small voice within.

This voice could free me from my occupation and my preoccupations. I saw more clearly how I could walk away from my compulsions—the rat race that was slowly driving me mad. But I had to learn to be all ears, to listen. Distractions and keeping busy had kept me deaf to that life-giving direction.

Busyness is one of the diseases of our time—a byproduct of the work ethic. Like many others, I envied productive people who had little time to spare. I longed to shine in use. I exalted the full calendar with people to see, projects in progress, planned entertainments, birthdays to remember and resolutions I had half forgotten but which continued to nag me.

The sad truth is, even when I was fully engaged, my best efforts were never enough. Despite being filled with things to do, I was still unfulfilled. For years I had the lingering suspicion that what I did probably made little difference anyway.

"Is that all there is?" I asked myself.

**Learning to listen.** At Manna House I joined others in a retreat from noise and worry. How refreshing to take our meals together in silence. We each met with a spiritual director and we celebrated mass on Saturday evening, but the rest of the weekend was spent learning to listen. I experienced a peace I had nearly forgotten.

Contemplating words from the pastoral theologian Henri J. M. Nouwen, I rediscovered an ancient truth. When one's heart is rooted at the mystical center, everything else falls into place—vocation, family, performance, peer criticism, suffering, even the future.

My task now—my main job, in fact—is to keep my heart set on that one central truth. Despite what I have read about a hierarchy of human needs, my bodily survival is not as central as my spiritual survival. "You must lose your life in order to find it," said the man from Nazareth. Distractions may make economic survival seem to be the real issue.

**New directions.** Lately I notice some changes. I am no longer anxious to say something when I am with someone. I don't have to offer a solution or even the right words. Just being present with another and sharing the silence is enough. I seem to be more patient with myself and with others. I am slower to become frustrated. Yet I know that, being human, I will continue being hateful and loving, cruel and compassionate, fearful and joyous. As Nouwen says, nothing human is foreign to me.

I have given up my career in journalism for something I had previously ruled out—sales. Recently I took a job selling microcomputers. This is a new departure with much to learn about the product as well as saleswork. I like it even though I am a novice again. Now more than ever I need to contemplate my fortune. Solitude helps me remember that all work is honorable as long as I keep my heart set in the right place. All else will follow.

So I suggest we rewrite Tennyson:

". . . How necessary to pause,
To rust unashamed,
To flow like a river
And dry up again,
As though to breathe were life . . .
Indeed." •

No invention since the industrial revolution will in the long run change our lives more than the computer.

*Kenneth and Anne Rupp*

# We have a computer at home

"I would like to get a computer," one of our brothers said more than 15 years ago.

"A computer?" we said. "What would you do with a computer? How would you use it in the home?" The idea seemed unreal. Today we own a computer. We use it for our work and in our home.

No invention since the industrial revolution will in the long run make greater changes in the way we live. Among other things, the computer will affect our understanding of stewardship, how we use money and how we use time. Life has grown much more complex in the last few decades. With about 50 percent of Mennonite women working outside the home in job and career, less time is available for many of the household functions earlier done by the person who stayed home. The computer is one of the ways some of these tasks can be shortened and simplified. Many people think of games when they hear of home computers. Games, either preprogrammed or those you or your children program yourselves, are only a small part of computers. Many educational programs for all ages can be purchased, making it possible for more learning to take place at home. But a computer in the home has many more functions than games or educational programs.

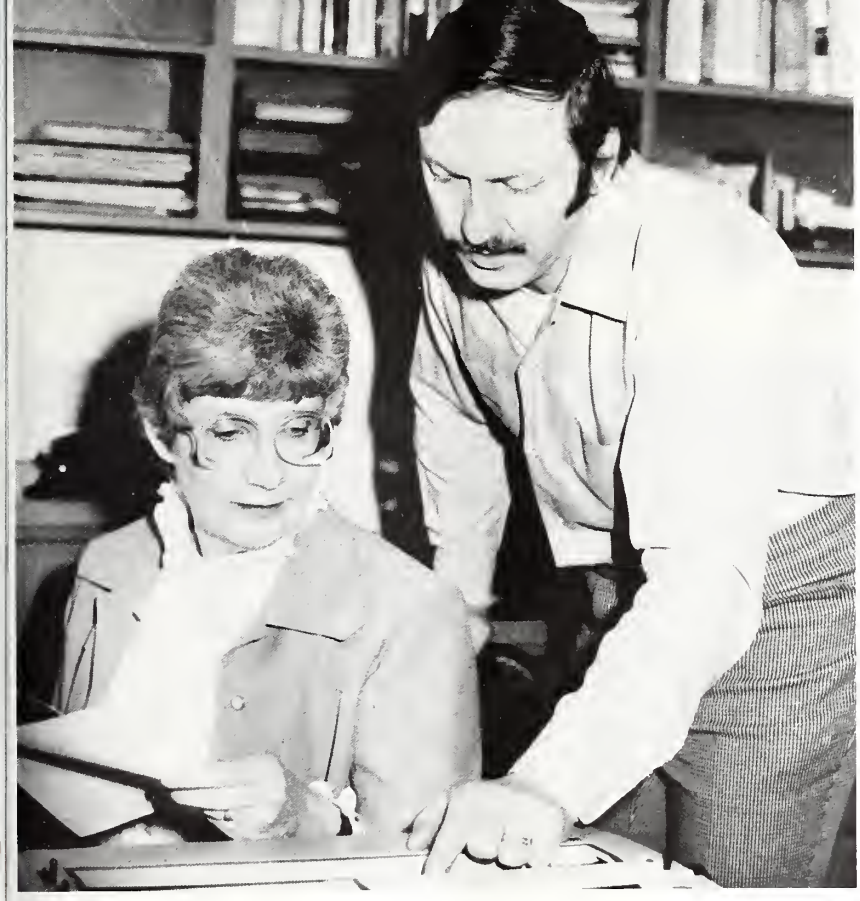
*Record keeping.* We use the computer primarily for our household accounting system. Our family operates on a budget and keeps a record of every dollar we spend. Entering our purchases into the record book has become a habit, but adding up columns at the end of the month is time consuming and can be inaccurate. Tax time comes and more time is spent totaling the various incomes and deductions and categorizing them.

The computer has simplified this. In the kitchen we keep a form made on the computer and easily changed when needed. Expenses are listed after shopping without having to leaf through an account book looking for a specific category. At different times the contents of these pages are entered into the computer.

At the end of the month after a few key strokes the printer types out pages of organized and accurately totaled records. Sometimes a family member comes up with a late entry or other change. Earlier our account book was often filled with crossed-out figures, additions and changes due to late or wrong entries. With the computer we just add any new information, and moments later a new printout again gives you an orderly account.

At tax time getting all that data together had been a hassle for us. This year we asked our computer to give us the tax information we needed and in a few minutes it was all neatly organized and ready to record onto the tax forms. What a relief to have tax forms filed early with so little effort.

*Correspondence.* Do you write many



*The computer makes checking and changing your records into a simple task.*

business letters, sometimes to several companies with the same information? Do you write your government representatives about your Christian concerns but dread the time it takes to sit down to write and rewrite? The word processing program in the computer helps. As you type, the letter appears on the screen. You may move paragraphs around and delete sentences or change words. When you are finished, a few more key strokes and the computer checks spelling and grammar before printing it. Names and addresses appear on the letter according to your wishes, and envelopes can also be addressed.

Do you write many personal letters? Many of us live far from our families and former friends and letter writing is one way of keeping in touch. Every November we begin a long letter writing process. Because we don't care for form letters, we used to write and write, usually repeating at least a core of the letter over and over again. Last fall we used the computer. We blocked off and copied the core message we wanted to share with each person. When we wrote a particular family member or friend, we could add at the beginning and end, insert anything we wanted into the block, or delete and change as we saw fit. Letters were finished in a much shorter time, they were personalized, and we could enjoy writing them because we didn't get writer's cramp.

*Communication.* Many people use the computer to communicate with others. You are no longer isolated in a small community far from a large city. You can talk with other people, find information in large libraries and order materials all through the use of your computer hooked up to your telephone line.

*Meals.* Do you ever rush home from work to cook a meal and find out you don't have the necessary ingredients? Do you wish someone else would make your menus and grocery lists? The computer likes to do this. You store your favorite recipes in the computer initially and add others whenever you wish. You may also buy ready-made programs and then only add your favorite recipes. The computer asks you what kind of foods you would like to eat during the coming week. You list them and out come proposed menus. If you ask for a grocery list, the computer will list all ingredients and include how much you need according to the number of servings you are making. The computer will adjust the recipes accordingly. Some programs will even list the calories.

If you don't like to plan ahead, the computer can also help you. If you let it know what you have on hand in the freezer or refrigerator, it will suggest possible recipes. This is especially helpful for those days when you are too short on time to browse through recipe books or think of something different to make.

*Filing.* If you are a music lover, photography buff or collector, the computer can help you keep track of any data you want handy. It helps you find your record, slide or stamp without going through the whole collection time and time again. Entering all this data initially takes time but is less time consuming than typing or writing out file cards. Storage of information on disks takes up little space when compared to card files.

The idea of a computer in the home is still new. The potential of a computer in the home is just beginning to be explored. To date we see only "through a glass darkly" how computers will revolutionize our lifestyle in the coming decades. For most of us, the use of a computer still leaves many questions. One of these may be, What will we do with all the time and energy we have saved? We suggest that we share it with our families and our churches. •

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# Paradise lost and regained: Psalm 104

*Michael A. King*

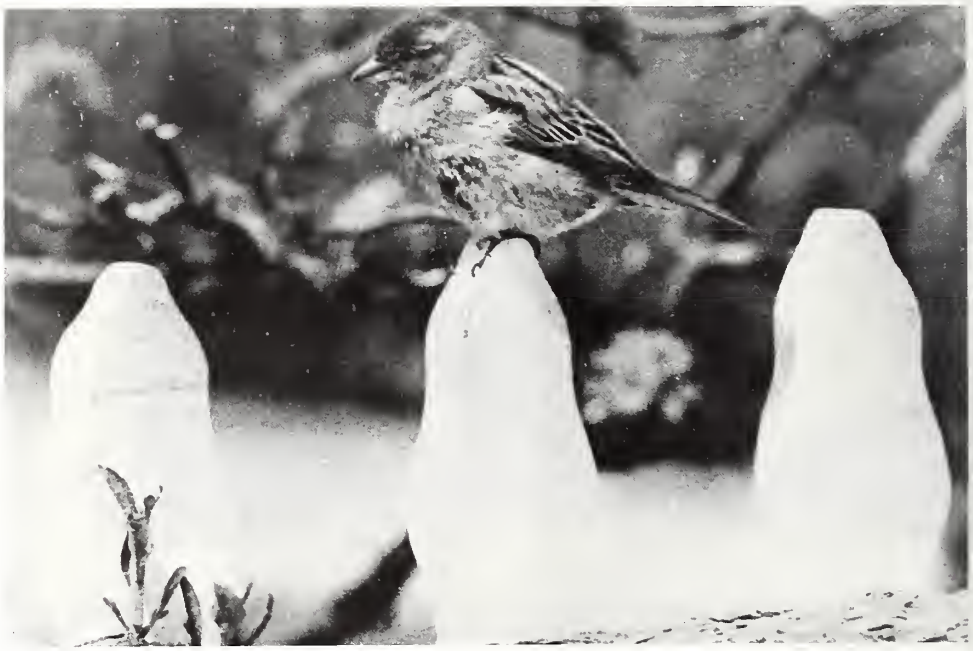
Mircea Eliade, a student of world cultures and religions, says a recurring theme in all societies is nostalgia for a long lost paradise. People in that time were immortal and could commune directly with God. Their food was provided for them. "Either a Tree provided subsistence or else agricultural implements worked of themselves" (*Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*). This was a time when heaven and earth were close, when all creation was unified and whole, when people and animals, flowering things and creeping things, stones, water and air twirled together in a pulsating dance of joy. The stories say people and animals were such good friends they even understood each other's language. It was a golden time for which we long and try to recreate through canoe trips, retreats and walks beside the sea.

We long for it because it exists no longer. It's explained differently in different cultures but all sense there has been a Fall between that golden age and our sad one. Among its tragic results has been a break between people and nature.

There are at least three ways people try to cope with that break. Our modern, Western way of relating to nature is to stand *over* and try to force it into our own image of paradise. I see a symbol of paradise and our fall from it at the Philadelphia Zoo. What I find there soothes me on the one hand. "See, Kristy," I say to my daughter, "that's an elephant." "Ephephunt," says Kristy, wisely. Then on we go to the lions and the tigers, the sea lions and bears, the snakes, the giraffes and the jungle birds. As I try to see the zoo through Kristy's eyes, I am moved by these strange, awkward and magical creatures with whom I feel a nameless bond that makes me dream of a time when they and I could talk.

On the other hand, I'm saddened as I gaze at them, because they live behind bars. We can't simply criticize the zoo for caging them because, as signs throughout the zoo point out, many of them would cease to live at all if they didn't live in zoos. Human beings continue to destroy their natural habitats.

The news has many stories of people moving across the country, forced to leave homes dangerously contaminated by waste from toxic dumps. The rain in Pennsylvania is so filled with acid from industrial smoke and car exhausts that it eats away statues and buildings and is gradually killing lakes, streams and trees. Astronauts note that the earth, which shone blue in space just 10 years ago, now looks gray.



*There was a time when all nature was unified and whole.*

Why have we perverted our relationship with nature to the extend that no one knows whether the world can survive our presence in it? How did we come to see ourselves as nature's dictators? Part of the answer lies in modern science. I'm not entirely critical of science, which has offered many important insights and benefits, but it can be dangerous when we make its assumptions the basis for our world view. According to Huston Smith, when scientists concluded that the universe was "a coherent, law-abiding system," they paved the way for our modern outlook toward nature, which is controlled by three presuppositions: "First, that reality may be personal is less certain and less important than that it is ordered. Second, man's reason is capable of discerning this order as it manifests itself in the laws of nature. Third, the path to human fulfillment consists primarily in discovering these laws, utilizing them where this is possible and complying with them where it is not" (*Beyond the Post-Modern Mind*, p. 7).

To the extent this view controls our thinking, we see the world as something to be understood and then controlled, to be exploited when possible for our pleasure and comfort. We cling to this view even as the evidence mounts that because of it the world is being destroyed. Instead of admitting that we have trapped ourselves in a lifestyle that demands the cars, industries and appliances that are ravaging our environment, we claim that through more of the same, through understanding and controlling the world better, we can cure the mess.

Maybe one of the reasons we are so tempted to stand above nature is that not too many centuries have passed since people thought they stood *under* nature as its slaves. They tried to recover paradise by appeasing nature. In those days, and still in some cultures today, people worshiped sun and moon, trees and stones and water, thinking they were deities. So they engaged in bizarre fertility rites, animal and even human sacrifice to buy the favor of the gods.

This was a superstitious view of nature, but it had its strengths. It offered

its adherents a world filled with mystery and meaning in which the crashing thunder was the rumble of an angry god, the sun's warming rays a god's benevolent gift, the wind a divine caress and the earth a mothering goddess.

Out of this world emerged a third view which contains and affirms elements of the first two but goes far beyond them. In this view human beings stand *beside* nature because both they and nature find unity in being God's creatures. They are not slaves of unpredictable deities who control their lives in a chaotic universe, but neither are they masters of an orderly and impersonal universe that has no need for God. There is an awareness throughout the Bible that nature is fallen and broken. But there is also the conviction that something of paradise remains, some sense in which the whole creation, all reality, shouts triumphantly and whispers tenderly of the glory of God. There is a sense in which a stone, a flower, countless stars gleaming in black space or a sky hushed in pregnant expectation of the snow that is about to fall are sacred symbols of God's presence.

And so the Psalmist can say, "O Lord my God, you are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters. He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the winds. He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants" (Psalm 104:1ff NIV).

The Psalmist weaves an image of the world as a place in which the wind and the seas, the streams and mountains, the donkeys, the grass, the trees and the birds are all living things obeying God's commands. Nature is alive with mystery and meaning as in the primitive view, but the fear of unpredictable gods has been transformed into trust in one faithful God. The order discovered by science is also implied but it affirms the order maintained by a loving God rather than the meaningless working of a lifeless machine. As W. G. Pollard notes, science is itself now tending toward the view that "mystery is not so much a puzzle to be cleared up as an essential quality of reality . . ." (*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. V, p. 790).

C. S. Lewis captures this spirit in the *Chronicles of Narnia*, his series of seven books for children which tell of the magical world of Narnia. Narnia is created by the great lion Aslan, who tenderly commands his world, "Narnia, Narnia, Narnia. Awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees. Be talking beasts. Be divine waters" (*The Magician's Nephew*, pp. 98-99).

But when evil comes to Narnia and paradise is lost, the trees and animals can no longer speak. I think we can learn something about how to relate to all the living things in our world from Lucy, one of the English children who finds her way into Narnia and one day perceives that even in fallen Narnia trees are not just trees, objects to be exploited only for lumber. "A great longing for the old days when the trees could talk in Narnia came over her. She knew exactly how each of these trees would talk. . . . She looked at a silver birch: it would have a soft, showery voice and would look like a slender girl with hair blown all about her face and fond of dancing. She looked at the oak: he would be a wizened but hearty old man with a grizzled beard and warts on his face and hands and hair growing out of the warts" (*Prince Caspian*, p. 112).

We rejoice in the early chapters of Genesis and passages like Psalm 8 that we are "only a little less than God" and have been created to fill a grand role in creation, but we seemingly are deaf to our responsibility to carry out that role in harmony with God's love for all creation.

Many Christians were among those watched by the Native Americans when they saw, as Huston Smith describes it, ". . . a landscape dismantled. . . . Untapped, unravaged, its grains of soil had been to them beads in the garment of the Great Spirit. Its trees were temple pillars, its earth too sacred to be trodden save by soft skin mocassins. Across this unparalled expanse of virgin nature there poured hordes possessing a capacity so strange that they seemed to the natives they dispossessed to represent a different breed: the capacity to look on everything in creation as material for exploitation" (*The Forgotten Tradition*, p. 55).

Native Americans can help show us the way toward a Christian relationship with nature. With our simplified lifestyles, with our pro-environment votes, with our support of technologies and sources of energy that place us beside and not over nature, with a passion to see the whole earth treated as a place God breathed into life and sustains with that breath, we can root ourselves deeply in the bibical understanding of nature.

The clouds, the wind and the sun aren't our gods, but clouds aren't just clouds, winds aren't just winds, the sun's not just sun. The winds are God's messengers, the clouds are his chariot and "he wraps himself in light as with a garment. . . ." And trees aren't just trees. Listen some night to the soft showery voice of a silver birch.

*Michael A. King is pastor of the Germantown Mennonite Church, 47 W. Johnson St., Philadelphia, PA 19144.*

# The better way of peace

*Marilyn Black Phemister*

Our correspondence started out as an interesting, friendly exchange of letters. We hardly noticed when the tone became a debate or when the debate became an argument. Before we realized what was happening, we had entered a full-scale war.

I found myself buried under a barrage of long letters, tapes and literature—all in support of the exclusive authority of the church to teach doctrine. I spent hours in study, composing replies in defense of private interpretation of Scripture.

He responded with more letters, tapes and literature—this time reviewing case histories of terrible heresies arising from private interpretation of Scripture. I sent back lists of heresies arising from blind trust in the authority of the church. The tension increased. We searched our arsenals for more powerful weapons.

I saw missiles with multiple warheads on the launching pads. With no end to the struggle in sight, I decided I'd better pray for this young man to come to his senses. I thought he might be praying the same thing for me, but of course I knew he was the one in the dark. So I prayed and I began to see a flicker of light.

I asked myself what the struggle was all about and suddenly realized we were fighting over the baby clothes. We had forgotten all about the baby. Christianity is a relationship with the living God made possible through his Son, Jesus Christ. It may be found clothed in doctrines, creeds and various church rituals, but the clothing is not the baby.

The baby is the Spirit inside us crying out, "Abba! Father" (Romans 8:15). It is the sonship shared by all believers as we cry out to the same heavenly Father and the same Jesus Christ.

As this truth grew from a flicker of light to a steady flame in my heart, I no longer wanted to argue about peripheral things. I wanted to get back to cultivating my relationship with God and sharing my Lord with those around me.

Hoping to end hostilities, I wrote to my pen pal to offer peace. But the conflict had gone too far. Giant barriers blocked the doors, and the young man continued sending tapes and letters to defend his position. Then one day his letter came from a mental hospital. Not long after that, one of my letters to him came back marked "deceased."

With the death of my correspondent came the end of our correspondence and the end of any opportunity to share Christ with a troubled young man. It's too late to help him now. But it is not too late to help others. For the future, I will choose peace.

*First appeared in* Sunday Digest, *© 1982 David C. Cook, Elgin, IL 60120.* *Marilyn Black Phemister, Box 186, Pawnee Rock, KS 67567, is a free-lance writer.*

*Normally we think of pacifism relating mainly to actual war, as in this scene from Lebanon. But the article points out how much all of us need to daily consider the ways of peacemaking.*

# He is my friend

*Elizabeth J. Schertz*

When, decision in hand, I stood alone,
He became my friend.
When nerves would steal my confidence,
He was a calming oil.
When I wept an ocean,
He caught my tears and held them.
When I questioned my very being,
He reminded me who I am.
When all my world seemed darkness,
He became my light.
When loneliness stalked me,
He walked by my side.
When life felt aimless,
He helped me find my direction.
When I asked what love is,
He continued to show me.

# They too deserve a family

*Gary Hiller*

"This isn't a *home*, is it?" Don beamed as we toured the new Friendship Community group home at 5815 Main St., East Petersburg, where he would now live. To him, he was sharing a house with five good friends, three of whom would be, like himself, limited in judgment and ability to learn. His other two friends would be a young married couple upon whom he could rely for friendly advice, guidance and teaching. His new home would not be an isolated, sterile, hospital-like environment that seemed designed for people who were somehow diseased. Instead, it would be located in the middle of a residential neighborhood where a middle-aged man in the prime of life could work, mingle with neighbors, walk to the store and have normal dreams and ambitions.

Don paused to touch the nylon velvet upholstery on the living room sofa and scan the coordinating wallpaper, carpet and curtains. His smile of appreciation told me it was worth the effort to create a place we could both be proud of.

"Can I eat here tonight?" I asked Noel Lehman, the Friendship Community staff person who was filling in until the houseparent couple arrived. "Don't ask me, ask Janet," Noel said. "She's the one in charge of the meal tonight." I instantly knew the answer, and Janet's broad smile confirmed it.

*"On that day the Lord will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David . . ." (Zechariah 12:8).*

As we sat at the table in the newly remodeled kitchen, Janet asked, "Who will say grace?" Don's roommate, Doug, as usual, had the answer, "Our honored guest." The mealtime conversation soon turned to the houseparent couple. "Of the three couples you met, which did you like best?" I asked. "Jeff and Janet," Janet replied. Perhaps she was just partial to the name Janet, I thought, but Doug confirmed, "I like Jeff and Janet." "How about you, Don?" "They were all nice," he replied. "I'd take any of them."

As I drove home I reflected on the long, tedious process which brought this community living arrangement into being and opened these new doors for mentally handicapped people. Sadly I thought of the several Mennonite parents who expressed the desire that they survive their mentally limited child "so that they don't have to go to a home." How I wish they could see the smiles of joy and enthusiasm that these new residents possessed as they embarked upon a life that would be as rewarding and productive as possible.

Of course, much depended upon couples like Jeff and Janet who would be willing to adopt a ready-made family. The way of operating would be much like having a family of four children. As is typical for fathers, Jeff would keep his regular job and go to work each day. The residents would also be gone during the day, working in sheltered workshops. In the evening, with the whole family together, time would be spent teaching living skills to the residents.

In the Friendship Community program, houseparent couples receive one full-time resident adviser salary in addition to free room and board. The couple also has two free weekends each month and the backup of relief staff, a program specialist, and the overall Friendship Community system.

This summer Friendship Community will have an opportunity for couples to begin terms of service in this rewarding role. The homes are located in East Petersburg, Manheim and Millersville. Applications and inquiries should be directed to Charles Bauman at Friendship Community, Route 3, Lititz, PA 17543, (717) 299-1795 or 656-2466.

*Gary Hiller is social worker supervisor for Friendship Community.*

No major resolutions passed

# CMC sessions concentrate on pursuing peace

Three Hills, Alta.—On the heels of one of its most "successful" years for some time, the 1984 annual sessions of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada were held July 5-10 at Prairie Bible Institute here. Report books reflected 100 percent budget income the past year, record student enrollment at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, a new executive secretary for the Congregational Resources Board (Rudy Regehr) and a new president for CMBC (John H. Neufeld).

With this background and the theme "Seek Peace and Pursue It," attendance was at the usual high level in spite of many CMC people planning to attend Mennonite World Conference.

Most of Friday, July 6, was given to facing the theme head on. Ron Kraybill, director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. mediation services, led the conference in a half-day training seminar.

Kraybill got immediate attention with his statement, "No issue is more important to a congregation than how you deal with conflict." He then elaborated on five "dangerous misconceptions": (1) Be nice at all costs, (2) be tough and decisive so people will know you're serious, (3) avoid the conflict, (4) let an outside expert show you what to do, (5) find the right answer and conflict will resolve itself.

Ron countered these with three New Testament theses: (1) Conflict is normal and inevitable, (2) focus on procedure and not on eliminating differences, (3) involve people in direct dialogue, use outside help when needed and use the gifts of people within the church whenever possible.

Two role-play situations demonstrated the application of these principles to conflict within a congregation and to conflict between two individuals.

Jim Wallis, outspoken Washington peace activist, author of several books, pastor, evangelist and editor of the radical evangelical magazine *Sojourners*, spoke three times on the CMC theme.

Wallis said evangelism and the call to being peace-*makers* and not necessarily peace-keepers or peace-lovers—and most Mennonites are the latter—are one issue. He said the nuclear arms race is today's clearest symbol of human rebellion against God by attempting to take ultimate power in the world. History is

*Jim Wallis: time to meet the real Jesus*

at a crossroads where once again Christians have to choose to be willing to die for the salvation of humankind but covenant not to become killers of our fellow humans. This requires a justice activism that includes peacemaking in its broadest sense—righting injustices to the poor as well as those among the powerful.

Wallis expressed encouragement at the growing participation from all churches in the peace issue. Telling the CMC not to count on a peace movement, he urged CMC people to become prayerful, disciplined action people who begin peace ministries with confession of sins. Our God of miracles could still help us to find release from the nuclear trap.

In another session Wallis chided Christians, both evangelical and liberal, for putting Jesus on a pedestal where he doesn't interfere with our rationalizations. He told CMC people it's time to meet the Jesus who lived like a real person in a real world. Evidence shows that where Christians live with the most freedoms, spiritual joy and peace seems at a low level. Where Christians suffer the most, the joy of Christ is the most radiant.

In his third presentation, a sermon to the joint Sunday morning worship service of the CMC body and the congregation of Prairie Tabernacle of PBI, Wallis emphasized that the common ground of the two groups was Jesus. The issue was not peace but conversion, since the question to ask is, "What does it mean to be saved?" Christians are called to follow Jesus and challenge the current assumption that people are expendable. Wallis took the CMC body on a "whirlwind tour" around the world, demonstrating how people have been made expendable because of economic, political and social situations. He reiterated the call of Jesus, "Love your enemies," stating that "we cannot simultaneously love our enemies and plot their destruction." Our enemies can no longer remain faceless.

Wallis pointed out that conversion is the issue, since the "root cause of war is our lack of conversion, our utter lack of love." Wallis defined conversion as "seeing Jesus and seeing our neighbor" and urged his listeners to see the poor and oppressed as neighbors. Christians' only response to the spiritual crises of nuclear war is repentance, which can provide hope. He challenged the congregation to ask what they as Christians could do for the sake of peace, declaring that the cost of "waging peace" must be at least as great as the cost of waging war.

Although there were varied reactions to Wallis' presentations and some vocal opposition on the part of PBI churchgoers in the discussion after his final presentation, Wallis' lifestyle and ministry to the poor in inner-city Washington and his biblically based messages impressed his listeners. Not all could agree with his actions of civil disobedience and his peace activism, but many expressed that they had been challenged to work for peace in their own settings.

Also reinforcing treatment of the theme was a series of "peace testimonies." Lawrence Hart, Cheyenne Indian chief from Oklahoma, told how his own life was influenced by peace chiefs in his background who had tried to live out their commitment to never taking revenge.

John R. Dyck, Rosthern, Sask., a war tax resister and longtime worker in the church, told how his service overseas

*Vancouver singers served CMC sessions with special music directed by Marvin Regier.*

*Gloria Miller: four non-controversial things*

and at home had contributed to his role as a peacemaker.

Jessie Kehler, Winnipeg, spoke of how "making peace as a way of life has been a slow and gradual process." Her incentive to work for peace had come from her parents and her experiences in Mississippi during the civil rights movement, as well as a visit to slum areas in Bangkok.

The Canadian Women in Mission brought the theme into personal focus by sponsoring Gloria Miller of Sioux Falls, S.D., who works with Parenting for Peace and Justice. She spoke with passion and fervor about "four non-controversial things you can do for peace":

- *Pray.* Do nothing for peace before you give yourself to God in consuming prayer.
- *Talk to Christians.* Our greatest hope and possibly our greatest challenge is to help our fellow believers come to know and follow Jesus Christ also in his peace teaching.
- *Teach our children.* Miller encouraged the use of Mennonite curriculum in our churches to best teach the way of peace.
- *Tell the truth.* Most people are ill-informed about the realities and implications of the arms race. Interpret facts and help people understand.

The 1984 CMC sessions did not seem planned for heavy business discussions. In their reports, boards requested counsel rather than action on prior resolutions. Native Ministries wanted delegates to counsel them on how mission theology for native Christians can help them also to be Indians or native.

The Congregational Resources Board invited guidance on how to respond to the growing evidence of violence (spouse abuse, child abuse, incest) among Mennonite families. They also asked for response to their church planting strategy to be implemented in the next five years. Some hesitancy was expressed on the conference floor that church planting not become "too scientific" but must remain spiritual. The CRB also brought the issue of jury duty to the conference floor, in light of several CMC members' recent call to serve.

The Canadian Mennonite Bible College board asked for input about future development of programs and facilities and received affirmation to develop its program in the area of peace, justice and international concerns. The practical theology course offerings were also affirmed, and appeals were made to contribute to the D. P. Neufeld Endowment Fund.

Together with the Committee on Ministerial Leadership, CMBC explored the possibility with the delegate body of establishing conference-based theological education and a junior seminary in western Canada that would provide CMC students an opportunity of studying in their own context and alleviate financial pressures of attending AMBS for three years. The CML also invited opinion on the suggestions in Rod Sawatzky's paper to the CMC sessions, "Authority and Accountability."

The General Board invited response on interchurch and inter-Mennonite issues, suggesting that membership in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches be recommended in 1986.

The 82nd annual sessions of CMC closed without passing any major resolutions or business.

The 1985 budget of $2,755,735, an increase of 8 percent over 1984, was approved, including a new salary schedule for conference employees, as well as resolutions on appointing representatives to the Canadian Institute on Peace and Security and on optional fasting for several meals at the 1985 sessions to be held in Regina, Sask. *Bernie Wiebe and Brenda Suderman*

# General Board names development director

*Suter*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Acting on a decision made at its Council of Commissions in March to inaugurate the first phase of a development campaign, the General Conference has appointed a new staff person to spearhead that effort.

Carol J. Suter, member of Grace Mennonite Church, Pandora, Ohio, has been appointed by the conference's General Board to the position of development director, effective Sept. 1. A lawyer with the firm of Schroeder, Schroeder & O'Malley Co., Ottawa, Ohio, she has served on the conference's Division of Administration since 1980, and as its chairman since 1983.

Suter received her law degree from Pettit College of Law, Ohio Northern University, Ada, Ohio, in 1981. Prior to joining the Ottawa, Ohio, law firm in 1979, she was employed for seven years as a high school English and speech teacher, including three years in Jamaica under Mennonite Central Committee's Teachers Abroad Program. Suter's undergraduate training came at Taylor University, Upland, Ind., and Bowling Green (Ohio) State University. She graduated from the latter with a bachelor's degree in education in 1971.

While serving as chairperson of the DA, Suter also chaired the committee which prepared the development plan for the conference.

"I am really excited about being an integral part of this development plan and the General Conference staff," Suter said in commenting on her new position. "I believe God is calling General Conference Mennonites to greater faithfulness and a more biblical stewardship ethic. We must become serious about providing the money to carry out the mission."

Although employed by the conference's central offices in Newton, Kan., Suter will carry out her assignment from an office in Bluffton, Ohio, with extensive travel to other church communities within the denomination.

**Seven thousand openings** are now available for short-term missionaries, reports Intercristo, a national job referral service based in Seattle. The six-week to two-year positions usually do not require extensive formal biblical training, affording mid-career lay people an opportunity to use their professional skills abroad.

**Are young adults still interested in the Mennonite church?** Is the Mennonite church still interested in young adults? Both questions were addressed at the Midwest Student and Young Adult Workers Conference held June 9 in Urbana, Ill. Young adult workers from 10 locations in Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Iowa attended the conference, which was cosponsored by Student and Young Adult Services (Mennonite Church) and Commission on Education (General Conference). Myrna Burkholder, director of SYAS, gave statistics showing that regular church attendance decreases for individuals in their early 20s. She said it is normal in their faith development for young adults to distance themselves from the church for a period of time in order to acquire an internalized faith rather than an external faith imposed by others. James Dunn, COE's secretary for young adult education, said, "The church will need to become increasingly ecumenical, interdenominational and able to provide acceptance for young adults needing to distance themselves." Since 1979, SYAS and COE have been building a network of contact persons in cities, university settings or communities with new populations of Mennonite young adults.

## Pacific District forms multicultural mosaic

Paso Robles, Calif. (GCMC)—About 400 people attended the first joint meeting of the Pacific District Conference (General Conference) and the Southwest Mennonite Conference (Mennonite Church) held here June 21-24 at First Mennonite Church and a local school.

Participants formed an unusual multicultural mosaic of Dutch-Swiss, Chinese, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Hopi, Hispanic, Navajo and black people. At this conference the SWC accepted an Indonesian fellowship into membership, which added another people to the rainbow-like gathering.

Joint sessions were co-moderated by Al Heer, who was in his last year as PDC president, and by Hubert Brown, moderator of SWC. The two conferences have a joint missions committee, several dually affiliated congregations, and share in the church planting and evangelism services of Don Yoder. Therefore, joint agenda was not hard to find, and one official resolution was passed jointly. Upon its passing, Heer remarked, "I think we are the first joint conference to take 'actions' jointly."

Both conferences have a history of focusing on "kingdom happenings" or what's going on in the congregations. Because of the joint meeting, this was limited to emerging churches and those with special happenings. It became a highlight as people heard about the rapid growth of the San Francisco Chinese Mennonite Church, the outgrowing of original facilities and a second group emerging from the Santa Clara Ethnic Chinese Mennonite group, the Home Bible Studies and renewal at the Glendale Church, Lynden, Wash., the stewardship and attendance "explosion" at Family Mennonite Church in Los Angeles, the projected SWC Olympics ministry, the Hector Muñoz church planting ministry among Hispanics in Los Angeles (now on his fourth church in five years) and the revitalized work at Bethel Mennonite Church in Santa Fe Springs, Calif.

*These five people were part of the Moencopi, Ariz., representation at Paso Robles.*

John M. Drescher, popular author and speaker on family life, gave four addresses on the conference theme, "Love, Loyalty, Unity in the Family." Drescher was applauded for his heart-to-heart talks. He challenged people to recognize that marriage can make you bitter or better. If you want marriage to become better, you need to confess that love is a lifelong growth experience and you must work at it. At the heart of such growth is the need for commitment that is deliberately renewed and practiced in learning more about love, about communication and about prayer.

Drescher urged congregations to work at preventive programs before marriages come to crises. Premarital education and other special teachable times like the arrival of a first child, the teen years, midlife and retirement assessments, and marriage growth retreats are some examples.

In his closing address, Drescher called Christians to improve their relationships by building their "who" level of communication. He said too many relationships remain at information sharing and telling instructions without revealing much about personal feelings and beliefs. Two of the greatest gifts for marriage and family growth are to give ourselves to each other and to learn more about each other's true selves.

PDC business agenda was short, and the executive expected an abundance of time. They accepted Mennonite Covenant Fellowship, Clackamas, Ore., into membership. Heer remarked this was the eighth new church joining in his four years of presidency. A planned constitution change was tabled for a year to do a more comprehensive revision. Another resolution agreed to seek a joint PDC and Pacific Coast Conference (MC) in the near future. These actions passed quickly and unanimously.

The final resolution asked the PDC to endorse a statement on homosexuality. It had been adopted by the combined PDC and SWC executives in September 1983 and declared a guide for the conferences and churches. Discussion became intense immediately, and over a dozen delegates spoke pros and cons. Opinions were strong and divided mostly about the appropriateness of this statement while the larger conferences are working on this issue. Amendments and tabling motions soon tied up the floor in confusion. When someone called for a ballot vote even on the tabling motion, one person challenged the delegates that this action was not of the Holy Spirit. Finally both the original resolution and the amendment were withdrawn, thus closing this discussion. There was a reminder that the matter needs urgent attention and that the executive should do further work on it as soon as possible.

Newly elected PDC officers were James Wenger, president, Ken Peterson, vice president, Charlene Schrag, secretary, and Cleon Claassen, treasurer. The 1984-85 budget is $128,600, calling for a 24.7 percent increase in giving from the 2,659 PDC members. *Bernie Wiebe*

July 31

# THE MENNONITE

## WM EDITION

# window TO MISSION

AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1984

# THE OPEN WINDOW

"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!"

Psalm 96:3 (RSV)

I believe that God's love manifests itself to me through other people, and that other people experience God's love through me.

The word *love* is often used loosely. We say, "I love chocolate," or "I love my mother," or "I love my spouse." We use the same word for all three different feelings. We may think of *love* as a warm feeling of passion or affection that comes to us and envelops us. We may think of *love* as a strong liking for or interest in something.

When my husband and I spent a weekend in Marriage Encounter we learned of a whole new concept of love. It is not just a feeling one waits for or hopes to receive, nor is it a keen interest in someone or something. We learned that "love is a decision." I believe that the Bible encourages us to practice this kind of love when it talks about declaring God's glory and love.

Our 1984-85 program theme for Women in Mission is "Declaring God's Love" focusing on Psalm 96:3 quoted above. In our meditations and articles we want to look at how we declare God's love in our own lives, or experience it in the lives of others. Through our programs we want to discern together how we can declare God's love through the aging process, to the hurting among us, to women abroad, and to the Hispanics in our North American communities.

It is my prayer that as Women in Mission across Canada and the United States study together and share with one another, we will find inspiration to declare God's love in such a way that many may experience his love through us as individuals, as provincial or district WM conferences, or General Conference Women in Mission.

—Elsie Flaming, president
General Conference Women in Mission

WM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# HOW WE DECLARE GOD'S LOVE ...

## ... in Montana

BETHEL MENNONITE Church, Wolf Point, Montana, is small and isolated enough to cause some to wonder about how and why it continues to exist.

The congregation was forced to face this very question when the original church building burned in 1967. The decision to rebuild was not automatic. It was not even easy to make.

Services continued in the parsonage garage for about five years while accumulated frustrations surfaced and were faced. When the new building was eventually completed, it was for a people who had emerged with a new commitment to be a church together.

Perhaps there was also a new reason. God could use the church in a new way, to share his love with other people, their Norwegian neighbors. The two ethnic groups had come to homestead at the same time. Separated by culture, history, language, and denomination, they had little in common. They had shared the often harsh environment, a love of farm life, and perhaps a mutual suspicion of one another. God could now begin to use Bethel Church to break down these barriers.

The process had probably begun years before when a Christian woman of a different background moved into the area. It was difficult for her to accept the barriers that existed between the two ethnic groups. A deep heartfelt prayer was born, "Lord, please show me the way to get through the wall." Involvement with 4-H helped, but it was not until after the rebuilding of the church that opportunity came to lead a Bible study with women from both groups.

As God's Word worked many changes, and as people began to have a closer relationship with God, the old barriers began to crumble. The younger women now have a Bible study group. The love and acceptance that Bethel people have for one another is now being shed throughout the community in many new and quiet ways.

—Joan Peterson

## ... in Alberta

If teachers are born, then Anne Heyde certainly was one of them. Moreover, she recognized her talents and used them. Her professional teaching career was short, but she served the Sunday school of First Mennonite Church in Calgary, Alberta, for most of her lifetime.

Years ago Anne said, "I'm not here for the children to like me, I'm here to teach them." During those teaching years there were many children who felt intimidated by her stern look and strict discipline, but the fact that so many of her students became her friends, visited her in her last illness, and wept at her funeral, showed that they had learned to love her as well as learning the facts she had taught them.

While many of us bemoaned the fact that children no longer memorize Scripture, Anne formulated a plan to correct the problem—"Memorize for

Mission." For each verse memorized sponsorship dollars went to missions. What one child might gain in memory work, a slower learner could make up by collecting more sponsors. The benefits were two-fold: the children committed the Bible to memory, and the funds raised were spent to buy school kits which then would enable other children to learn.

Although most of Anne's work was related to Sunday school, she also helped in women's mission work by sewing, quilting, and knitting. However, she was most actively involved in missions at home—helping the stranger at the door or in the neighborhood.

After they already had several children of their own, she and her husband, Ron, took in foster children. With each child that was subsequently adopted, she sent along a piece of her heart, plus an encouraging little note to the new mother.

She has given an extra loving touch to her own children, two of whom are somewhat handicapped. She taught them to deal with their problems realistically and kindly.

With each new development in her illness, after the initial setback, she came forth with new fervor and sense of urgency. It had to be *now*, not *someday*.

Instead of feeling self-pity as she lay on her bed, her mind was forever at work. Ideas would come to her. She then would telephone someone to say, "I would like to see such-and-such done, and I feel that you would be the right person to do it." She inspired and encouraged others with her positive attitude, and soon her dreams were transformed into realities.

Anne died of cancer at the age of fifty-two. She will long be remembered for the diligent way in which she "declared God's love" to the many people she encountered along the path of life.

She was my friend.

—Irene Klassen

## . . . in Pennsylvan

In the spring of 1983 the children in our Lancaster congregation (all twelve of them) planted potatoes in a tiny plot at the edge of our church parking lot. "What can you do with a potato patch?" everyone asked.

As we watched the potato plants grow, we began to imagine how this little plot might lead us into greater service in the community at large.

Our Bible school was entitled "What Can You Do with a Potato Patch?" and was a serendipitous, intergenerational, lively attempt to increase our awareness of and concern for others both far and near. Upon hearing about the needs in the Lancaster area we decided to respond.

Our first significant contribution was to the Food Bank, a program that collects and distributes food for emergency needs. We gave two baskets of potatoes which the children had harvested.

Then some of our women volunteered to work in a "food closet" in a large Spanish-speaking church in Lancaster. Volunteers visited with persons from the church mostly with smiles and nods, since none of us knew Spanish.

Our children collected food for the "food closet" as their Christmas offering and shared in a wonderful pre-Christmas program the day they delivered the food.

Now we have been assigned to work with other volunteers in a large suburban Methodist church. Food for three healthy meals for three days is bagged for families listed by social service agencies.

Maybe we will become hosts, distributing food, helping to create an atmosphere of friendly sharing with recipients. Perhaps I will learn to speak Spanish.

So, "What can you do with a potato patch?" has been partly answered. But

as we planted potatoes this past spring, we again asked the question and are eager to see how it is answered this time.

—Suzanne Hilty Lind

## ... in Ohio

Her aspirations as a small girl were to be a missionary and a nurse, but because of the depression in the 1930s, Grace Jaberg's dreams did not materialize. God had other ways of service, of caring and sharing, in store for her.

Working with young people in the church became her interest. She traveled to Shipshewana, Indiana, with youth from First Mennonite Church in Sugarcreek, Ohio. In her role as chaperon she assured a young lady that twenty-nine safety pins on her underclothes were certainly enough to hold things together! At the same time she rejoiced with a young man named Russell Mast who made a decision that week to become a minister.

Back home Grace met with a group of girls called *Batesda*, named for the young Indian girl they were helping to support with money earned on various projects and offerings.

"Oh, but we can do more," was their teaching; so an organ fund was begun. It seemed a next to impossible project, but the organ was purchased and served the congregation well for many years.

"But we need a new ceiling," was the new cry, and so the teenagers did a project to replace the sanctuary ceiling.

During World War II she led a community youth project when gasoline was scarce and folks needed to stay near home. They memorized Bible verses and had spell-downs.

Another time a group of young people traveled by train to Camp Mac in Indiana. The trip was hot and traveling in the car directly behind the coal car and locomotive made things cooler. When they arrived they were quite a sight, covered with coal dust and soot from the locomotive.

Grace helps people become beautiful both inside and out. She truly lives up to her name. The creed by which she lives is summed up in, "There is a destiny that makes us brothers; no one goes too far alone. All that we put into the lives of others, comes back into our own."

—Sue Jaberg

## ... in Arizona

Doris Stucky, a charter member of First Mennonite Church in Phoenix, Arizona, has always been one to see a need and then quietly and effectively seek a way to meet it.

She played a significant role in starting a General Conference church in Phoenix in the early sixties, and over the years has worked in various capacities locally and in the Pacific District Conference.

Before she entered the area of real estate, Doris taught many years in a private Christian school. Her caring attitude and interest in her students motivated them, and many have kept in touch with her through the years.

Her Christian faith is evident in her work as a realtor. Through her contacts with co-workers and their friends two Bible study groups have begun, and her faithfulness in shepherding these groups has helped many community women.

Several times, with the help of these groups, she has temporarily housed women in trouble, helping them until they could make it on their own.

Several of the women from the study groups have become members of First Mennonite and are now an active part of the fellowship.

When commended for the work she does, Doris responded, "It still amazes me that God can take a shy woman out of a silo in Kansas and use her in a large city like Phoenix!"

—Carolyn Yost

# PROGRAM RESOURCES 1984/85

*"Declaring God's Love" (Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! Psalm 96:3 RSV) is our 1984-85 Women in Mission program theme. The following program-lessons will appear in* Window to Mission *during the coming year. Program committees should save these for their files. Below the list is a theme sketch which you may want to use for your program booklet covers.*

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1984**
*Program 1:* "Declaring God's Love Through Witness and Service" — Each of us can "declare God's love" right where we are, making his Word "come alive" through service.

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1984**
*Program 2:* "Wellness and Aging—a Concern for All" — As we grow older we face new challenges. Wellness as a part of "wholeness" is an important aspect of the passing years. This program-lesson speaks to each of us.

**DECEMBER 1984-JANUARY 1985**
*Program 3:* "Women in China" — This program will focus on women in China today.

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 1985**
*Program 4:* "In the Stillness of God's Love" — We are called upon to "declare God's love," but to do this effectively we must be spiritually filled. How can we learn to meditate and grow in God's Word?

**APRIL-MAY 1985**
*Program 5:* "Declaring God's Love to the Hurting" — Throughout our communities people are hurting. How can we best bring God's healing love to those in need?

**JUNE-JULY 1985**
*Program 6:* "Declaring God's Love to and Through the Hispanics" — The Hispanic population is rapidly growing in the United States and Canada. Learn about this growing ministry.

# PROGRAM 1

# Declaring God's Love... Through Witness and Service

Judy Schrag

*"Sing a new song to the Lord! Sing to the Lord, all the world! Sing to the Lord, and praise him! Proclaim every day the good news that he has saved us. Proclaim his glory to the nations, his mighty acts to all peoples." Psalm 96:1-3 (TEV)*

These words have a familiar ring, a challenge to sing praise to Almighty God for his goodness to us. They invite us to sing, but they also challenge us to action—to proclaim his glory to all peoples.

Psalm 96 was used in the New Year's festivals of the Israelites. These festivals commemorated their deliverance from the wilderness and their entry into the Promised Land. It was a time of great thanksgiving and praise to God for protection and guidance.

The purpose of the Israelite celebration was threefold: remember the past leading of God; anticipate future guidance; and celebrate God's presence in their present daily lives.

It was a celebration of their faith in and their dependence upon their God. Celebrating the past was not enough, they needed to look into the future and accept the challenge to declare God's love to all people.

These celebrations remind me of Mennonite celebrations in recent years. Congregations, colleges, hospitals, and even the seminary have celebrated the anniversaries of their founding.

Mennonites in the 1980s, just like the Israelites of long ago, have looked into their past and realized the cause for celebration. God has led them safely to their present situation, should they not return thanks to him for this gift? And so Mennonites have celebrated.

We celebrate God's salvation, but how often have we followed the challenge of verse 3? "Proclaim his glory to the nations, his mighty acts to all peoples."

Have we been content to bask in our celebration and failed to take the step of declaring God's love? We have honored our past by celebrating in the present. But what about the future?

As part of the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration of the Tabor Mennonite Church, in rural Newton, Kansas, in 1983, a program entitled Mission '83 was introduced.

Mission '83 was a homespun voluntary service opportunity for the congregation. Persons were encouraged to volunteer for short-term service assignments. The congregation agreed to help with some funding, but it was a token gift.

Seven persons left their homes to minister in Mission '83. These included two weeks spent in Colombia, South America, in the MENNO (Mennonites Encountering New Neighbors Overseas) program, several months working with a children's home in Mexico, six months working with missionaries in Brazil, South America, and three persons gave a major part of the summer in church camp work.

There were many Tabor Church persons who also ministered in the spirit of Mission '83 from their own homes. One of the women who spent ten weeks

away from home during the summer commented publicly, "I'd like to thank my mother and others who took part in Mission '83 here at home. My freezer contains beans, corn, and strawberries for our family.

"I gave a summer in VS, but I was worried about what would happen without a garden of produce to see our family through the coming winter. Thank you for your service to Mission '83 right here at home. We could not have done it without you."

Others wrote letters, cared for the homes, lawns, livestock, and pets of the VSers. Others took over church and community responsibilities.

Mission '83 was a big success, so this year the church is taking part in Mission '84. This year's theme is Tabor-Arvada (Colorado) Connection. Members of both churches are being encouraged to change places for a time to experience life in each other's setting.

The Denver projects include serving in soup kitchens, helping with Head Start programs, tutoring, and counseling, especially among the poor in downtown Denver.

Arvada members have been invited to spend time in rural Kansas—to sense the heartbeat of farm life and to experience a rural church setting.

The dream lives on. Who knows how many more VS opportunities lie ahead. We only need to heed the call to declare God's love through our witness and our service.

**What about God's love?**

To whom do we declare God's love? Where do we go? Everyone has the right to hear the Good News of Jesus, but who will spread the message?

Hopefully we have laid to rest the notion that only missionaries and full-time church workers can respond to the great commission in Acts 1:8. *All* of us have been challenged to spread God's love ". . . unto the uttermost part of the earth."

We have all been challenged! We are to declare God's love to *everyone!* We are to spread his love *everywhere*! Who will spread this message? *You and I!*

**The Good News to strangers**

Several years ago my husband and I were sight-seeing in New York City. The complexities of subway and bus schedules had us baffled. To our surprise, in this city of complete strangers, we were offered help and direction not once or twice, but three times by people on the street.

We have no idea if these persons helped us out of their Christian hospitality or simply as a humanitarian gesture of kindness.

**One of the most difficult things to give away is kindness—it is usually returned.**

**—Cort R. Flint**

I wonder if we who have the Good News of Jesus Christ are as willing to share these directions for living as were those persons who helped us in New York.

It is true that in New York we were in obvious need of help. We were lost. But do we not meet persons every day who are also lost and trying to find their way?

Sharing directions for traveling is easy. Sharing directions for right living is much more difficult.

A workshop in Wichita, Kansas, several years ago gave us the opportunity to share the Good News with complete strangers. Our assignment was to walk along the streets of the city during a Sunday afternoon sidewalk celebration and share with two persons something about the Good News of Jesus.

Our encounters were varied. Some listened and quickly dialogued. Others terminated the conversation as quickly as possible. Perhaps we should have studied the faces and behavior of per-

sons before we attempted to share with them. Perhaps we could have identified those persons who were searching direction just as my husband and I were identified as persons needing help in New York.

Accepting the Good News of Jesus is more than a one-time encounter, but perhaps this one step will open the door for another encounter with the Good News.

Cornelia Lehn's book *I Heard Good News Today* (Faith and Life Press, 1983) contains a beautiful story of helping a stranger in need. The story "You Owe the World Something" (p. 141-42) tells of Margaret on her way to a rural church to lead a Sunday school teachers' workshop.

Her car stalled and she was stranded some distance from the church. A man stopped to help. He could not repair the car, but drove her to the church for the workshop. He was concerned about whether she would need transportation afterward. She assured him that she would be fine.

Margaret asked the young man for his name so she could properly thank him, and his reply was, "I will not tell you. That way you will not owe me, but you will owe the world something. Pass it on!"

We don't know if this young man knew of the Good News of Jesus, but we do know that he was willing to help someone who needed assistance.

We have all been helped. We have heard the Good News, but have we all acknowledged that "we owe the world something"?

**The Good News at home**

We need not search for strangers with whom to share the Good News. We can share it in our own churches and communities. There are many avenues for declaring God's love right at home.

Some churches have annual commitment Sundays when each person fills out a commitment sheet with his/her plans for service within the church during the coming year.

Perhaps the most important commitment is the one "to pray for the work of the congregation." All of us can pray and all of us *must pray* for the work of our church in God's kingdom. Through prayer we can deliver the power of God's love to all people.

There are commitments to service that are never written down. These are personal commitments to help some person in their mission or ministry.

I have benefited from these commitments. I enjoy teaching Sunday school but sometimes my preschool children have gotten sick on Sunday morning, and since my husband is a pastor he couldn't stay home to care for them. A neighbor volunteered to help me out. "Just call me and I will run over and stay with them so you can teach," she said. I wish I would have kept track of how many times I took advantage of her commitment to service.

**The Good News for everyone**

God has given us all the ability to serve him, but we each express this ability in different ways. Two stories from *I Heard Good News Today* illustrate this.

Gladys Aylward was a missionary to Yangching, China. Her call from Christ led her to establish "The Inn of Eight Happinesses" to minister to the needs of the Chinese people. Eventually Gladys led 100 children to safety in war-torn China in the late 1930s. She walked over the mountains with these children, seeking freedom on the other side of the Yellow River. They reached their "Promised Land," but it was a long and difficult journey ("Bring Them In" and "On the Way to the Promised Land," pp. 53-56).

Katie Peters is another woman who served. She was a quiet woman who was often overlooked in the church. No one really knew much about her. It wasn't until the community relief sale

that Katie's witness became known. There amongst all of the quilts and crafts was a quilt "with such a beautiful, intricate and artistic design." The quilt had been made by Katie Peters. "Katie had found a place to use her gift for the rest of humanity" ("Her Gift," p. 138).

Gladys Aylward and Katie Peters both declared God's love through the witness and service of their personal lives. Their lives and personal experiences were very different, but they each responded with the gifts that God had given to them.

We do the same in our lives. No one of us is like another woman in mission. Each of us has her own particular call to declare God's love through her own particular style of witness and service.

Whether we *leave* our homes and enter full-time service as did Gladys Aylward and the Mission '83 volunteers or whether we minister *from* our homes as did Katie Peters and the Mission '83 support persons, the lives we live serve and witness to our Lord.

We can never repay Christ for his love to us, but we can pass it on to others. We owe the world something!

## PROGRAM "HOW-TO" IDEAS

1) For your devotional, use the material suggested for Program 1 in the 1984-85 Devotional/Resource Packet available from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114 for $2.

2) Obtain one of the slide sets available from the Commission on Overseas Mission, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, to get a glimpse of how God's love is declared overseas. These sets can be booked rent free.

3) Invite someone who participated in the Mennonite World Conference in France to share their impressions of how God's love is declared around the world.

4) The folk song "Pass It On" (Lexicon Music, 1969) would be an excellent theme song for this program year. Many contemporary songbooks contain this song.

5) Invite several women to tell about how someone has helped them spiritually, emotionally, or physically. Discuss how we can really never repay someone for the help they have given us, but we can pass it on to someone else in the form of another kind deed or action.

6) Cornelia Lehn's book *I Heard Good News Today* (Faith and Life Press, 1983) would be an excellent resource for devotionals. Read the stories referred to in the program in their entirety.

Consider using this book's resources as devotions for the entire program year. It contains many stories to challenge our thinking in declaring God's love.

7) As a WM group memorize Psalm 96:1-3. Our children are expected to memorize in Sunday school, maybe we ought to do likewise.

8) Dream together about how you could enable persons in your congregation to do short-term VS projects. Can your dreams become realities?

# slice of life

**Jeannie Zehr**

LORD, WHEN WILL you show us your will for the future? We've prayed. We've searched. We've discussed. We've weighed the pros and cons.

It's so difficult waiting on you, Lord. Waiting to see clearly what you want us to do. Waiting to feel your presence and leading.

I sit at the piano, playing and singing. "God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year. . . ." The verses seem to speak hope. Hope that you, Lord, are working out the plan and purpose for our future walk with you. Reassuring me that in your own good timing you will let us know what we should do.

But, today, Lord, I'm hitting low. I'm tired of waiting. I'm tired of trusting and praying and wondering. Tired of living with indefiniteness. How much longer, Lord? How long?

There are others waiting, too. Waiting while loved ones are in surgery. Waiting for word from a child serving in war-torn Central America. Waiting for healing in their own bodies. Their waiting is so much more life-and-death centered than is mine.

Thank you, Lord, that I know from my past walk with you, that after rain comes sunshine. After death comes life. After waiting comes your answer.

Amen. Amen.

Twenty-third in a Series

# A WOMAN IN MISSION:

## Lora Oyer

Ruth Unrau

SOME WOMEN accept leadership responsibilities reluctantly, only to find that the experience is one of personal growth which they find very rewarding. Such was the experience of Lora Schultz Oyer.

In 1969 when asked to be on the ballot for first vice-president of the General Conference Women's Missionary Association, Lora consented, not expecting to be elected. When elected, her reaction was, "What a blow!"

Six years later in her final report she wrote, "This has been an exciting time to be a part of a wonderful group who have earnestly sought to be sensitive to God's leading. . . . Striving to know how we can be most useful in God's Master Plan is a continuing process."

Growing up on the Bluffton College campus where her father was a faculty member, Lora caught the message from her parents that the work of the General Conference was important.

After graduating from Bluffton College with a major in music and marrying Dr. Russel Oyer, her life was filled with teaching in northeast Ohio for six years, and then the activities of homemaking and mothering three sons.

In 1954 the Oyers moved to Chenoa, Illinois, where they remained in the center of medical, community, and church activities. For many years Lora has directed the choir of the Meadows Mennonite Church.

As first vice-president she represented WMA on the Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section. "Here was an opportunity for our women's groups to be able to relate more directly to some of the many concerns and issues of the time," she commented.

Lora became aware that many young women were not finding fulfillment and challenge in the traditional roles open to women—mother, Sunday school teacher, and member of a sewing circle. She began to struggle with "what we could do to make it possible to keep the energy, the talents, the gifts of these Mennonite youth in our churches."

This concern drew her into working as one of the first members of the MCC Peace Section Task Force on the Role of Women in Church and Society. Here she learned many skills for making her ideas heard in a "man's world." She confided to a church leader that, although she had spoken personally to a chairperson about a concern, and he had agreed, nothing had happened. His

advice was, "Put it down on paper. When it is on paper they have to deal with it." Since taking his advice, her letters have brought about some remarkable results!

She left the WM Executive Committee in 1975, but in 1977 was asked to be on the ballot for president. And so followed seven years of working with the Executive Committee to clarify and achieve goals, of becoming involved with intercultural and international exchanges.

Her trip to Kenya and Zaire in 1981 strengthened her desire to communicate to Women in Mission the needs of women in other countries and the avenues for helping them.

Lora has expressed thankfulness for the challenges that have come to her and gratitude for the financial and spiritual support that women in our General Conference churches have given to WM during her tenure as president.

We who have worked with Lora thank God for the leadership she has given to Women in Mission, and for the stretching and growing she has asked those of us on the Council to do as we worked together.

Lora has helped WM to expand its role in helping to educate overseas women and children. She has brought a good professionalism to the office which has enhanced communication with provinces and districts. The *WM Policy Manual* has been a step forward in regularizing policy.

It was with Lora's urging and encouragement that our WM history, *Women in Search of Mission*, and the mission storybook for children, *I Heard Good News Today*, were written.

Lora, WM wishes you God's blessing as you go on to other calls. We know that a part of you will always be with Women in Mission.

## CONSIDER READING

*The Outward Bound* by Vernard Eller (Eerdmans, 1980) is *must* reading for anyone interested in what is happening to congregational life. Eller frankly acknowledges that it is an attack on Christendom, a loving attack, made in hopes that these rather shocking insights will effect greater faithfulness.

He presents some models which contrast the tendencies of modern congregations with biblical teachings and example. The first contrast is referred to throughout the book: caravaning versus the commissary. In fact the book's subtitle, "Caravaning as the Style of the Church," indicates Eller's plea for a return to the New Testament concept of the church as being those of the Way—caravaning. He sees the church as "a group of people banded together to make *common cause* in seeking a *common destination*," a group that takes risks, always progressing. This is in contrast with the commissary—an institutional establishment interested in its own preservation, handing out spiritual goodies to the card carriers.

Eller challenges the church to disregard people-made success goals. Live simple, disciplined lives, conscious of our mutual responsibility before God, not because God or the church needs our service, but because doing God's will is our highest joy.

One "terminally ill congregation" which felt it had failed gained new incentive and inspiration through this book.

—Anette Eisenbeis

# WM office jottings from Joan

**Helping the Hurting**

An ongoing concern and one of the goals of Women in Mission is that of relating to hurting persons. One such group includes those who are experiencing an unwanted pregnancy.

Ken and Phyllis Schmidt of Middlebury, Indiana, are exploring the need for support services for persons in Mennonite congregations who are faced with such a crisis. These efforts include testing the scope of need for such services, developing a roster of good Christian counseling services, finding Mennonite families who would be willing to share their homes as a retreat, and a listing of Mennonite couples who wish to adopt children. After exploring and testing, recommendations for ongoing program sponsorship by an inter-Mennonite agency will be made. Interested persons are invited to contact the Schmidts at 15468 CR 18, Middlebury, IN 46540.

**1984**
**GENERAL CONFERENCE**
**WOMEN IN MISSION FINANCIAL GOALS**

| | |
|---|---|
| COMMISSION ON OVERSEAS MISSION | $121,000 |
| AIMM Cash Needs - $7,000 | |
| COMMISSION ON HOME MINISTRIES | 35,000 |
| Intercultural Ministries - $6,000 | |
| Church Planting - $5,000 | |
| Media - $4,000 | |
| Peace & Justice - $2,000 | |
| COMMISSION ON EDUCATION | 17,500 |
| Marriage Encounter - $2,000 | |
| Mission Education Materials - $1,000 | |
| SECRETARY FOR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION | 15,000 |
| WM PUBLICATIONS | 25,000 |
| MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY | 10,500 |
| Scholarships - $3,000 | |
| Nursery Renovation - $7,500 | |
| MISSIONARY SUPPLEMENTAL RETIREMENT FUND | 10,000 |
| WOMEN'S WORLD OUTREACH | 8,000 |
| PERSONAL GROWTH FUND | 2,500 |
| AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY | 2,000 |
| WM CONTINGENCY | 4,000 |
| Total | $250,500 |

U.S. contributions should be sent to Women in Mission, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. Canadian contributions should be sent to respective provincial treasurers.

# contributors

**Elsie Flaming** (The Open Window) is our new General Conference Women in Mission president. She and her husband live near Leamington, Ontario. Elsie is a musician, nurse, mother, and grandmother who enjoys homemaking and volunteer work.

**Joan Peterson** (How We Declare God's Love . . .) grew up in western Montana. She met her husband, Neville, in Singapore and spent fifteen years as a missionary in Laos. She enjoys teaching a high school Sunday school class and is looking forward to taking up violin again.

**Irene Klassen** (How We Declare God's Love . . .) is our General Conference WM Canadian vice-president. She enjoys writing, reading, knitting, and traveling. She teaches an adult Sunday school class, and is devotions leader in her WM group.

**Suzanne Hilty Lind** (How We Declare God's Love...) and her husband, Tim, spent several years working in Africa and now live in Akron, Pennsylvania. She is kept very busy with their five small children, with involvements in the Bethel Mennonite Church in Lancaster, and with human rights advocacy work.

**Sue Jaberg** (How We Declare God's Love . . .) is director of choirs at First Mennonite Church in Sugarcreek, Ohio. She also serves on the worship committee and is president of the local school system music boosters group.

**Carolyn Yost** (How We Declare God's Love . . .) and her husband, Jerry, are the parents of three children. She works part-time in a doctors' office and also leads a Bible Study Fellowship. She serves on the board of the Greencroft Retirement Center.

**Kay Ann Fransen** (Program Resources 1984/85) is chairperson of the WM Literature Committee. She and her husband and daughters live near Normal, Illinois. She is actively involved in the Mennonite Church of Normal.

**Judy Schrag** (Program 1: Declaring God's Love Through Witness and Service) and her pastor husband, James, are the parents of three young girls. She enjoys doing counted cross-stitch. She teaches Sunday school and Bible school.

**Jeannie Zehr** (Slice of Life) edits *Window to Mission* from her home at 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

**Ruth Unrau** (A Woman in Mission) is our WM United States vice-president. She is our WM representative on the Commission on Education. She and her husband, Walt, make their home in North Newton, Kansas.

**Anette Eisenbeis** (Consider Reading) lives on a farm near Marion, South Dakota, with her husband, Larry, two sons, and a Taiwanese student. Having lived in Brazil for ten years, she is interested in missions, simple living, congregational life, and international peoplehood.

**Joan Wiebe** (WM Office Jottings) is WM coordinator with her office at 722 Main, Newton, KS 67114.

# credits

ARTWORK: Cover, p. 6, Dawn Ellen Stahl, Freeman, South Dakota. Photo, p. 12, Irene Klassen

Elsie Flaming

Irene Klassen

Sue Jaberg

Carolyn Yost

Judy Schrag

Ruth Unrau

# forecast

Aging brings with it many new challenges. What are the frustrations and problems? What are the joys? How can we experience these challenges with a good attitude? The October-November issue of *Window to Mission* will look at all of these questions, and more.

Printed in U.S.A.

# bright ideas

STRANGERS Become Friends" is a new sixteen-minute slide set available from the Mennonite Central Committee AV Library, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, PA 17501. It features the work of the MCC U.S. program, showing MCC workers in four locations across the United States.

For U.S. women's groups this might be a good program resource.

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Several WM groups have shared some of the creative ways in which they have spent their time around quilts at their meetings. Some other ideas recently appeared in the Mennonite Church women's publication *Voice* which you may want to try in your groups in the coming year. Here are some ideas:

—Take turns reading a book to one another. Assign a reader for each month.

—Play a tape of a speaker.

—Share stories of an experience when your faith was tested or where your hope was deepened.

—Share stories of women of faith from your congregation.

—Share parenting tips.

—Sing together as you quilt.

—Stimulate helpful conversation by having everyone around the quilt complete the following sentence: "The church was most helpful to me as a youth, when it. . . ." Other sentences to complete are:

"The thing that concerns me most about our political system is . . ."

"I feel most at peace when . . ."

"The thing I find most difficult to understand about God is . . ."

"If I had a magic wand I would like to . . ."

"One thing new I learned this past month was . . ."

—Take turns reading aloud through a book in the Bible.

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The First Mennonite Church at Ransom, Kansas, has held several Self Help sales in their church fellowship hall. They secure MCC Self Help Items from the Et Cetera Shop in Newton and display them for the sale.

Good advertising has made the sale bigger each year. Last November they sold $2,012 worth of items to enthusiastic buyers. All proceeds go back to the shop for the MCC Self Help Program. Unsold items also go back to the shop.

This is a great idea for groups to try who are in communities where MCC Self Help items are not available through local shops.

**Commission on Overseas Mission** missionaries and candidates met on the Bethel College campus in North Newton, Kan., June 25 - July 1 for a time of orientation and retreat. "We are privileged to be living in these days when there is a worldwide church, not just a church in the West," commented Roelf Kuitse, associate director of the Mission Training Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. Kuitse led the group in a series of Bible studies on the theme of "Hope and Mission." Robert Ramseyer, MTC director, challenged the participants on a variety

of topics such as cross-cultural communication, contextualization, urban evangelism and peace witness. Other sessions during the week focused on stress, newswriting, dialogue with people of other faiths, spiritual life and audiovisuals.

**Pakistan** now has the ability to make nuclear weapons, with assistance from China and the United States, according to Senator Alan Cranston (D-Calif.). He accused U.S. State Department officials of "withholding or downright misrepresenting the facts about Pakistan's nuclear program" to protect the $3.2 billion U.S. aid program for Pakistan and to preserve the U.S. nuclear sales agreement with China.

# Unexploded bombs continue to plague Laos

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—In late January, 16-year-old Ying and his three brothers were digging on a hillside to prepare the soil for planting rice in the northeastern Lao province of Xieng Khouang. Suddenly Ying's digger struck a small anti-personnel bomb (bomblet).

Shrapnel from the explosion penetrated his forehead and destroyed both of his eyes. Hundreds of tiny pellets from the bomblet tore into his brothers' arms, legs and abdomens.

When I visited the boys three weeks later, Ying's three brothers, 12, 14 and 19, were well on their way to recovery. Ying was not so lucky. He will be blind and probably mentally handicapped for life.

In 1983, 10 years after the war ended in northeastern Laos, 34 people injured by exploding ordnance were brought to the Xieng Khouang provincial hospital. Seven of these died. Doctors do not know, however, how many other ordnance victims were not able to make it to the hospital.

During the first five years after the war ended in 1973, 267 people died and 343 were injured in the province, according to government figures. These casualties are victims of continuing accidents from unexploded munitions still scattered over the fields and forests of Laos.

This ordnance not only threatens people's safety but slows post-war recovery and hampers food production. In 1981, province chief Yong Yia said that one-third of Xieng Khouang's fields lay fallow because of unexploded weapons in the soil.

Between 1964 and 1973, when the United States was trying to prevent a communist takeover in Indochina, American military forces dropped 2,083,000 tons of bombs on Laos, according to official U.S. statistics. These totals do not include shells, mortars, mines and other ground weapons fired by either communist or anti-communist forces.

Military experts estimate that about 10 percent—some say up to 30 percent—of the munitions used failed to detonate. If these experts are right, at least 200,000 tons of dud weapons had infested the fields in Laos by the time the war ended.

The most common ordnance found in Xieng Khouang is the so-called "guava bomb." Some 665 of these baseball-size bomblets are dropped from an airplane in a dispenser which splits open at a preset altitude. Flanges on the bombs cause them to spin as they fall, arming their fuses and dispersing them over an area about the size of a football field. Some bomblets are designed to detonate upon impact with the ground; others are equipped with delay fuses. When these bombs explode, they shoot out hundreds of tiny steel pellets.

Large bombs are relatively simple for the Lao to detect and disarm. But small anti-personnel weapons like the guava bomb which are easily buried in the soil or hidden in the undergrowth pose a much bigger problem.

The Lao have not developed a systematic technique for dealing with this small ordnance. Often when farmers find bomblets in their fields, they carry or throw them to some distant corner. American military experts, however, consider this casual handling of the weapons to be dangerous. The Lao, on the other hand, feel they have few options.

The most frequent cause of ordnance accidents is the most common Lao farming tool, a heavy, broad blade hoe which is driven into the ground with considerable force. In the late 1970s, Mennonite Central Committee began looking for a safer farm tool and sent some shovels to Xieng Khouang on an experimental basis. MCC hoped that the shovels would turn the soil more gently and thus detonate fewer bomblets.

"I like to use shovels to dig up the soil," a Lao later told MCC workers. "They dig up underneath the bomblets and are safer than hoes." Shovels seem to set off fewer bombs than hoes, but ultimately shovels do not dispose of ordnance and they are not efficient in clearing large fields.

In 1980, MCC custom built a tractor to experiment with clearing bomb-plagued fields. A flail, consisting of chain lengths, was attached to the front of the tractor and a rotovator with spinning blades was attached to the back. The driver was protected by a steel and plexiglass cab.

Unfortunately, this experiment was not very successful. For some reason, the tractor detonated only about one in four bomblets it encountered during initial tests. But even more serious, no one wanted to drive the tractor. Lao drivers feared that the tractor might detonate much larger ordnance such as anti-tank mines which would destroy the tractor and endanger the driver. *Murray Hiebert*


## Couple wanted

A Christian couple to provide a family-type setting at **Carmel House**, an MCC Saskatchewan sponsored group home in Saskatoon. Houseparents will be responsible for up to five boys aged 12 to 16 with some behavioral problems. Related experience is preferred.

Employment to begin in **September.**

Send application to:
Otto Driedger
410 Needham Way
Saskatoon, SK S7M 4X7
(306) 384-3808
**by Aug. 13.**

**Hubert Brown,** assistant pastor of Calvary Mennonite Church in Los Angeles, was guest speaker at the May 6 "Your Time Out" meeting held at the Saskatoon Centennial Auditorium. Carl Ens, senior pastor at Mayfair Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, and his wife, Gen, served as hosts for the evening.

**"Wholistic Ministry:** What Does It Mean to You?" was the theme of the Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly May 9-11 at the United Mennonite Home in Vineland, Ont. Keynote speaker Marvin Hein, pastor of North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church, Fresno, Calif., spoke on "Unfailing Obedience," "Unconditional Love" and "Inestimable Worth." Kay Froese was appointed executive director of CMHA, and George Loewen was re-elected president. The 1985 CMHA conference will be held in Winnipeg.

**President Yang Feng** and professor Li Shifen from the Sichuan Agricultural College in China visited Lancaster County in May as part of a two-month agricultural exchange sponsored by the China Educational Exchange. In June they visited farms, feed manufacturing plants, breeding stations and universities. Yang commented on American life, "Progress here is very fast. . . . America is considered a rich country, but in New York we saw beggars and poor people." This puzzled him after he had talked to farmers who had surpluses of milk and grain. "As a social structure," he said, "the American way of life is not perfect. It has its own set of problems."

## Minority youth serve in home communities

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—For the third year Mennonite Central Committee U.S. is working with minority communities through the Urban Community Development Summer Service program, which provides Christian community development opportunities for college-age youth.

This program, directed by Pleas Broaddus of the MCC U.S. Urban Ministries Office, enables black, Hispanic and Native American youth to work with a church or service organization in their home communities during the summer months. MCC U.S. and the local congregations support the participants.

The program is the largest ever this summer with 65 participants. Last year there were 42, and in 1982 there were 25 participants.

Through this program, minority college youth help to facilitate the development of urban communities, strengthen ties with their home communities and develop leadership and ministerial skills.

Summer Service participants are involved in a wide variety of programs. Some work as assistant pastors, youth ministers, peer counselors and Bible study leaders. One worker, a Hopi Indian, is working to "bring the gospel to the Hopi Indians through witnessing, Sunday school teaching, vacation Bible school teaching, and home, jail and hospital visitations."

A number of people work at children's camps as directors and counselors. Another worker in the Los Angeles area visits the sick and works closely with shut-ins.

Two participants in Jackson, Miss., work for a social service agency called Operation Shoestring. Their goal is to help the community children through recreation, crafts, day camps, tutoring, Bible teaching and nutritious lunches.

A Goshen (Ind.) College student works at Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., where she helps produce videos, communication workshops, various publications and television spots. Another student works with the Mennonite Board of Congregational Ministries' publication *Ecos Menonitas*, translating from Spanish to English and carrying out other office and clerical duties.

*Summer Service worker Karen Youker of Hammon, Okla., is involved in a ministry to Native Americans in her home community under the supervision of Rudy Martens (left).*

Other students are involved in such work as street ministry, housing programs, day care and Christian education.

Fifteen participants in the 1984 Summer Service program have been involved with the program in one or both of the previous two summers. The program is located in 18 states and in 38 communities.

Yvette Wall of Lima, Ohio, a senior at Bluffton (Ohio) College, is working for 20 weeks as intern assistant to Urban Ministries director Pleas Broaddus. She travels to many of the Summer Service locations to evaluate and become familiar with community programs and Mennonite mission and service programs in which the participants work.

*Linda S. Sauder*


**What happens to your family if you should die?**

MMA's Annually Renewable Term (ART) life plan helps with sensible financial planning now . . . to deal with difficult times that may come later.

***ART offers you flexible, dependable coverage . . . at low cost.*** You may apply any time between ages 19 and 64, and can be covered until you reach age 70. Your survivors will be provided for financially if you should die. And you help share the burdens of others in the church today.

For more on MMA's ART life plan, call toll free 800-348-7468; or (219)533-9511, collect within Indiana.

Mennonite Mutual Aid

**A Mennonite Voluntary Service worker** in Dallas traveled to Nicaragua June 26 to participate in the internationally recognized peace program Witness For Peace. Brad Ginter, who served as the leader of WFP's Southwest regional delegation, is director of Mennonite International Refugee Assistance, an organization which was formed to help Central American refugees apply for permanent residence in Canada. Witness For Peace coordinates regular visits of delegations to the border areas of Nicaragua where the contras—anti-Sandinista counterrevolutionaries—make frequent attacks on farms and small villages.

**The Muria churches are "alive and reproducing,"** say Luke and Dorothy Beidler, Mennonite church workers in Indonesia. "From the 20 established mother churches," they say, "there are 46 satellite congregations in various stages of development and growth. Sunday schools and weekly worship services are led by lay leaders, elders of established churches, part-time evangelists and ordained pastors of mother churches."

**To counter built-up stress ministers** should develop habits for replenishing their own spiritual resources, suggests Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute, a congregational research center in Washington. This replenishing can be accomplished through candid friendships, retreats and taking regular periods for relaxing.

# Believers' Church Conference discusses baptism

Anderson, Ind. (Meetinghouse)—A Believers' Church Conference was held June 5-8 on the theme "Believer's Baptism and the Meaning of Church Membership: Concepts and Practices in an Ecumenical Context." Hosted by Anderson School of Theology here, it drew approximately 50 people from numerous branches of the Believers' Church tradition. There were 14 Mennonites in attendance, the most from any one tradition.

The focus on baptism at this conference, the seventh in a series of conferences beginning in 1967, was occasioned by an ecumenical document entitled "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry" (BEM). This document grew out of years of discussions within the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and was given its present form at the 1982 meeting of Faith and Order in Lima, Peru.

In the section on baptism, the BEM document allows for both infant and adult baptism, but it acknowledges that "baptism upon personal profession of faith is the most clearly attested pattern in the New Testament documents."

The Anderson gathering tried to both understand the history, theology and practice of baptism within the various branches of the Believers' Church tradition and respond to the BEM document.

Besides hearing reports from people representing seven different Believers' Church perspectives, there was input from a supporter of infant baptism, speeches on the background of the BEM document from people who had been a part of the drafting process, and small-group and plenary discussion on the BEM document itself which culminated in a written statement in response to it.

In presenting background on the believers' conference, Mennonite theologian John Howard Yoder explained that "this conference represents a maturation in that we've decided to hit the big question head on" (that is, infant versus adult baptism). Yoder also asserted that this meeting represents maturation for believers' churches in that it begins theological consultation with other churches.

Marlin E. Miller, president of Goshen Biblical Seminary, represented the Mennonite perspective on baptism. The pedobaptist (infant baptism) perspective was presented by Louis B. Weeks, dean of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

Speaking from personal experience of involvement in the drafting of the BEM document were Lewis S. Mudge, dean of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, and Michael Kinnamon, professor of theology at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis.

Mudge said that the BEM document, while it is not an exhaustive statement, does represent a convergence of opinion on the subject among participants in the study. The document is now undergoing a reception stage among churches who participated in the study. All churches, even those who are not members of the WCC, are encouraged to make a formal response to it by December 1985.

Though the WCC has no binding authority over its member denominations, this document deserves attention and response from churches, even believers' churches, Kinnamon urged.

*Donald Durnbaugh (left) and Denny Weaver at Believers' Church Conference*

Small-group and plenary discussion culminated in the drafting of a consensus statement in response to the BEM document. Conference participants agreed that the BEM statement provides valuable guidance in several areas: in placing baptism firmly in the corporate life of the church, in calling for baptism to be an occasion when all members of the congregation can reaffirm their own baptismal vows, and for reminding churches of their corporate responsibility to nurture children in the faith.

Conference participants thought that the BEM document is deficient in not addressing adequately the active role of the participant at baptism in making a public faith response and in identifying with the church, in not linking baptism with the ministry (priesthood) of all believers, in not associating baptism with church discipline, and in its sacramental tendency.

Another Believers' Church Conference is tentatively planned for next year which will take up the issue of ministry. *Richard A. Kauffman*


## Have you considered Elim?

**Elim Bible Institute** in Altona, Southern Manitoba, offers a blend of Bible study, worship, community and service. Dedicated faculty and staff take a vital interest in every student.

For more information write:
Daniel Zehr, principal
Elim Bible Institute
Box 120
Altona, MB R0G 0B0
Phone (204) 324-8631.

**Mennonite Biblical Seminary,** Elkhart, Ind., has met its goal of $1 million in an endowment fund that began in 1980. Earnings from the endowment fund are designated for five projects: the Erland Waltner Chair in Biblical Literature, the Mission Training Center, the MBS student aid fund, the AMBS scholarship fund and the conservation of campus and buildings fund.

**Alta Erb** (left) of Scottdale, Pa., recently spent two weeks as a volunteer at Mennonite Central Committee's material aid center. At 93, she said she "finally has time to work in VS." She added, "But I work for this organization all the time at home." For many years Alta Erb has knotted comforters for MCC's relief projects. This was the first time she worked full time on material aid projects. "I never had time before I was 90." When asked why she became involved with MCC, she replied, "I wanted to work for the poor, so I knot comforters."

## Brethren adopt abortion paper, approve leadership training

Carbondale, Ill. (CB)—Delegates at the Church of the Brethren Annual Conference here June 26 - July 1 approved new directions in leadership training and ministry and adopted a one-page statement on abortion.

Because of a growing concern about leadership development and ministry, the denomination two years ago launched a major study of issues such as calling and ordination, consistency in standards, and educational options. One outgrowth of that study is a proposal for a new leadership training program geared toward pastors who are unable to carry out the recommended seven-year program of college and seminary. The delegates approved this program, along with other recommendations, and asked the committee to return to next year's conference with a position paper on ordination and calling.

The brief statement on abortion adopted by the 1,040 delegates is a revision of the much-longer 1972 Statement on Abortion. It does not represent a change in attitude from the earlier paper but is an attempt to state briefly and unambiguously the church's position.

The new paper says, "The Church of the Brethren opposes abortion because the rejection of unborn children violates the love by which God creates and nurtures human life." The remainder of the paper acknowledges society's role in contributing to unwanted pregnancies, recognizes the church's responsibility to change society and commits the church to "counsel with and to uphold one another, to maintain fellowship with those who differ and to extend to others the compassion we receive from Christ."

For the Church of the Brethren the abortion issue presents a conflict between two tenets basic to the denomination—respect for life and respect for conscience. The Brethren have long held that there should be "no force in religion," and the delegates sought to achieve a balance between stating firmly their opposition to abortion and upholding freedom of conscience.

The abortion paper received formal input from some 235 youth who had met the weekend before in a national Church of the Brethren youth conference. The youth had spent a full day debating the proposed statement on abortion in a "mini-Annual Conference," then presented their amendments to the delegate body at Carbondale. One amendment was adopted as part of the final paper.

In response to current military expenditures, the Annual Conference appointed a committee to study and recommend how Brethren should respond to the dilemma of paying for war through taxes.

## Mennonite Umsiedler to hold reunion

Neuwied, West Germany (MCC)—Two weeks after Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg a group of Mennonites will gather for another major event in Europe. Mennonite Umsiedler, or resettlers, who have emigrated from the Soviet Union to West Germany in the past few decades will meet in Bielefeld, West Germany, for the 12th annual "Umsiedlertreffen," or Umsiedler reunion.

For Umsiedler who for years were dispersed and isolated in the Soviet Union, these reunions have been important occasions to worship together, renew ties with relatives and friends and meet European Mennonites. The reunions also provide an opportunity for Umsiedler to fellowship among themselves across their own division of "kirchliche" Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren, which resulted from the 1860s break of the Mennonite Brethren from the mainstream Mennonite Church in Russia.

Umsiedler attending the Mennonite World Conference may still have some reserve toward fellow Mennonites whose lifestyle and theology are strange or even suspect to them. The Mennonitische Umsiedlerbetreuung, a ministry supported by the International Mennonite Organization (IMO) and Mennonite Central Committee, has worked to assist them in adapting to the broader Mennonite church and to Western society in general to the point that they are ready to participate in the Mennonite World Conference.

MCC's European partners in IMO want MCC to continue its involvement in the Umsiedlerbetreuung. Both IMO and MCC agree that the Umsiedler ministry has begun a new phase. By now most Umsiedler have found new homes, schools and jobs and are increasingly well-integrated into the complex social and economic system of West Germany.

Most Umsiedler are active in Mennonite churches or German Baptist churches. Since 1975 seven new Mennonite church buildings have been erected by the Umsiedler. Another four have added extensions and one congregation has purchased an older church building.


### Leading pastor needed

Leading pastor required for **Emanuel Mennonite Church.** Membership 120.

Please apply to:
Victor Krahn
253-32550 Maclure Road
Clearbrook, BC V2T 4N3
(604) 859-6775.

**More than 50 Anabaptist leaders** joined 500 from other denominations for a May 29 - June 1 seminar on "How to Plant a Church." At a Mennonite caucus, leaders responded to the Church Growth model presented at the seminar. Rudy Regehr of Winnipeg affirmed the need to strengthen leadership. Don Yoder of Tempe, Ariz., said the church needs to stand with church planters. Leroy Kennel of Lombard, Ill., urged the participants to "adapt" rather than "adopt" Church Growth principles. "What was missing for me here was shalom, the well-being of the whole person," said Menno Ediger of Markham, Ill.

**A second study/travel tour** to the Holy Land for pastors and lay leaders will be offered through the General Conference's ministerial leadership services office. The tour will depart from Chicago on Feb. 13, 1985. Jacob T. Friesen, MLS director, will again serve as tour host. The 1985 tour will be limited to 50 people and will again feature lectures and other study opportunities in connection with the travel itself. For information write: MLS, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.

**The U.S. Department of Energy** is seeking $3 billion to expand its production and testing of nuclear weapons. Some of the money would be used to prepare its Nevada test site for the testing of still larger bombs. The rest would go toward enlarging bomb-production facilities, especially at the Pantex bomb plant in Amarillo, Texas, where the Energy Department would like to triple the number of assembly bays.

# Bible reveals comic vision

The late renowned Scripture scholar and rabbi Samuel Sandmel once complained that most people miss those parts of the Bible that he calls "waggish, rollicking and picaresque." This soberness afflicts Christians in particular, according to Sandmel, because English translations have a "bareness" to them, whereas the Hebrew narrative has "a certain swing."

A case in point, he noted, is the book of Esther, which begins with "a party to end all parties" and ends with a boudoir scene that most Sunday schools skip.

Elton Trueblood, noted Quaker theologian and writer, says that Christ used "preposterous exaggeration" to get his message across—the same type of humor on which jokes about Texas are based. One example, according to Trueblood, is that of the Pharisee who took great pains to strain a gnat out of a drink and then "swallowed a camel" without even noticing.

The figure in Western civilization that perhaps best epitomizes humor is the clown, which has existed since early Greco-Roman times. In recent years "clown ministries" have become popular. Bill Pindar (below) is a prominent clown minister who uses his clowning techniques to bring smiles and laughter wherever he goes. Bill Peckham, a United Methodist minister, is the founder of the Holy Fools, a loosely knit fellowship of Christian clowns from 37 denominations. The group has 4,000 members. *Religious News Service*

# Daystar releases film

Henderson, Neb. (Daystar)—A new half-hour film titled *Strasbourg: City of Hope* premiered in Strasbourg, France, July 24-29 during the Mennonite World Conference sessions.

Commissioned by MWC and produced by Daystar, Inc., a non-profit inter-Mennonite media production agency, the film traces early Mennonite history from its spiritual roots in the Reformation through its contemporary identity as an international family of faith.

The film found its beginnings in a 1980 meeting in Chicago called by Paul Kraybill, executive director of MWC, to explore production of a film for the 11th assembly. As a result, Daystar was commissioned to produce a film which would impart the significant role that historic Strasbourg played in the lives of the early Anabaptists.

John L. Ruth, Pennsylvania Mennonite pastor, writer and filmmaker, wrote and directed the film, while Burton Buller of Nebraska, with over 30 films to his credit, did the cinematography. Diane Umble, a Kansas instructor and producer of media, took the role of executive director, and Jim Clymer from California was the location sound recordist.

Filming began in October 1982 on location in France. Many of the Mennonites of the area appear as actors and actresses in the film.

In addition to European flavor and texture, the film includes representatives of the worldwide Mennonite family.

The film is available in English, German, Spanish and French.

After Aug. 1, *Strasbourg: City of Hope* will be available to churches worldwide. In North America, the film will be available on a rental basis only. All inquiries should be addressed to the attention of Burton Buller, Executive Director of Daystar, Inc., 1053 Main, Henderson, NE 68371, (402) 723-4877.

**Alberto Quintela, Jr.,** consultant on Hispanic ministries for the General Conference's Commission on Home Ministries, attended the commissioning conference June 28-July 3 in Mexico City held by CAEBC, the Latin Mennonite Congregational Education Anabaptist Spanish Curriculum project, as it released the first published Bible education manuals in Spanish. The first printing is 5,000 copies.

**The Great American Smokeout,** a day that provides extra support for those smokers who know they want to quit and those who are beginning to think about quitting and want to give it a try, is sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Giving up cigarettes for 24 hours, ACS believes, just may motivate these quitters to give them up for good. This year Nov. 15 is the day that marks the eighth annual Great American Smokeout.

**Since Easter, demonstrators** in western Pennsylvania have crashed at least four church services, according to *Christianity Today*. They are union workers and church people who feel that wealthy, churchgoing economic leaders have turned their backs on the area's economic problems. On one occasion, 35 protesters broke up the service of a church attended by David Barnes, chairman of Pittsburgh's Mellon Bank. The demonstrators handed out dead fish, then petitioned Barnes to "reproduce the fish as Jesus did and feed the multitudes" in the area.

# RECORD

## MINISTERS

*Don Boschman* of Vancouver is involved at Tabor Church, Newton, Kan., as summer intern pastor. He will attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., this fall.

*Joshua Chang*, Taipei, Taiwan, is serving as summer intern pastor at Faith Church, Newton, Kan. He will attend AMBS this fall.

*Donovan Diller* has resigned as pastor at First Church, Beatrice, Neb., effective Nov. 1, to become pastor at Bethel Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

*Dorothy Nickel Friesen*, intern pastor at Rainbow Boulevard Church, Kansas City, Kan., will become pastor at Manhattan (Kan.) Fellowship Sept. 1.

*Roy Kaufman*, pastor at Pulaski (Iowa) Church, is on a three-month sabbatical this summer. *Donita* and *Marvin Hostetler*, Goshen, Ind., are serving as summer intern pastors there.

*Ted Kuschel*, co-pastor at St. John Church, Pandora, Ohio, will become co-pastor at Grace Church, Enid, Okla., Aug. 12.

*Lee Lever*, Lombard (Ill.) Church, is serving First Church, Beatrice, Neb., as a summer intern pastor.

*Richard Malone* has resigned as pastor at First Church, Clinton, Okla., effective July 31.

*Weldon* and *Jenny Harms Martens* will become pastors at Pleasant Valley Church, Harper, Kan., Aug. 5.

*Walt Neufeld* has resigned as pastor of Eden Church, Moundridge, Kan., effective Dec. 31, and will become pastor at Hanston (Kan.) Church and First Church, Ransom, Kan., Jan. 1, 1985.

*Tom Porter* resigned as pastor at Hopefield Church, Moundridge, Kan., May 31.

*Harold Regier* resigned as pastor at Walton (Kan.) Church July 1 to work full time with the Interfaith Offender Concerns Committee.

*Tim Schrag* is working with First Church and West Zion Church in Moundridge, Kan., as a summer intern pastor.

*Willard Schrag* resigned as pastor at Hanston (Kan.) Church and First Church, Ransom, Kan., June 30.

*Ward Shelly* has begun serving as interim pastor at First Church, Mountain Lake, Minn.

*Bill Stucky* will become pastor at Fort Collins (Colo.) Fellowship Nov. 1.

*Ralph Weber* has resigned as pastor at Inman (Kan.) Church, effective Aug. 31.

*Edward J. Wiebe* has resigned as pastor at Central Heights Church, Durham, Kan., effective Aug. 12.

## WORKERS

*Bill Adams* has been appointed director of community relations for BroMenn HealthCare, effective July 2.

*Lenore Adrian*, Steinbach (Man.) Church, has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa., as administrative assistant in graphic arts. Her parents are Jacob and Hildegard Adrian of Steinbach.

*Velma Braun*, Zion Church, Swift Current, Sask., has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with MCC as housekeeper at the Walnut Receiving Home in Winnipeg. She attended Swift Current Bible Institute for two years. Her parents are George and Mary Braun of Swift Current.

*Lois Deckert*, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., has been named by Women in Mission as editor of *Window to Mission*, the organization's bimonthly publication, beginning Dec. 1. A graduate of Bethel College, Deckert has served in Indonesia under MCC. She has been a member of WM's executive as U.S. vice president and served as WM representative to the Commission on Education and as advisory board chairperson of Faith and Life Bookstore, Newton.

*Ingrid Annette Peters*, Hanley (Sask.) Church, began a two-year voluntary service assignment with MCC in September 1983 as coordinator of the Open Circle volunteer visitation program at Stony Mountain Penitentiary, Man. She has studied at SCBI and Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. Her parents are Cornelius and Frieda Peters of Saskatoon.

*Adrian*

*Braun*

*Deckert*

*Peters*

## Appreciate applications

I am constantly amazed at the insight you reveal in your editorials from week to week. Your application of spiritual truths to life situations is well done.

I did, however, note the absence of emphasis on Pentecost this year. Thanks for all your efforts. God bless you. *Ward W. Shelly, Route 2, Box 51, Fortuna, MO 65034* June 21

*Editor's note: We didn't do as much directly on Pentecost as in some years. I did this in part because I want to include more Holy Spirit articles in more issues. Check May 8 and May 22.*

## Do not understand

We do not understand the studied silence of Mennonites and Mennonite leaders in British Columbia about the economic and social policies of the Socred Party.

The Social Credit party of British Columbia has cut the Human Rights Board, the Rentalsman's office and slashed education budgets. The Social Credit Party receives counsel from a think tank that advocates a policy whereby the unemployed of British Columbia should move if they cannot find employment. It is the way of the world. We understand but do not accept it.

What we do not understand is the silence of our Mennonite brothers and sisters in the face of these policies. Are we in agreement with policies that take from the poor, the widowed, the stranger and give to the rich, the powerful?

Why is a Mennonite touted on national television as being on the forefront of an anti-union movement in British Columbia? Are we in agreement with policies that would aggrandize personal fortunes at the cost of our brothers and sisters' well-being?

What of our youth? At last count they faced the bleak prospect of 15.6 percent unemployment. Has our kingdom of God no human face? Has our theology no place for the pressing needs of the unemployed, the despairing, the single parents, the elderly? Has our faith no expression in the real world?

Is the public silence of Mennonite leaders in British Columbia regarding the Socreds' economic and social policies a quiet affirmation of or a silent resignation to these policies? We would suggest that either response is tacitly unchristian and ought to be remedied forthwith with a liberal dose of repentance and action that God might be glorified. *Paul Born, Vic Krahn, Walter Bergen, c/o 30733 Simpson Road, Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3* June 28

## A Mennonite novel?

After I read two reviews of Rudy Wiebe's latest novel, *My Lovely Enemy*, I was anxious to read it myself. I must confess it surpasses anything I've read before in my long life. There is quite a progression here from *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, but not for the better. While the latter concludes with quite a senseless sexual act, here all the details of it are explored. This is objectionable because the acts are obviously performed between people who commit adultery. According to Wiebe these sexual drives and desires of the body are always good. That is the way the spirit expresses itself through the body. The sexual act is always an act of love; therefore, it cannot be evil or sinful.

Again and again we are hearing that the New Testament has been influenced to a great degree by Platonic ideas. Too much stress has been put on the spirit to the detriment of the body, which is then regarded as evil.

I also find the many allusions made to God and Jesus Christ offensive. Wiebe makes the suggestion to call God both father and mother. He also hints that Jesus as the bridegroom must do to his bride what all bridegrooms do to their brides—make love. Love, according to this book, is universal, and there are no real distinctions between different kinds of love. Love does not have to be restricted to one's spouse; it can be extended to other people, including the neighbor's wife or husband.

The love of the hero in this novel, James Dyck, in its purest form is directed against his mother but does not include his father because with him everything sexual was sinful. Therefore, he has to be hated.

When James Dyck makes love with the wife of his colleague, this does not interfere with his love for his wife and his daughter. Even his wife claims she could also love the husband of Dyck's girlfriend, with whom he is passionately in love, in addition to her husband.

There is not much of a plot in this novel. You never know where you are or if a person is alive or dead. The mother of James Dyck, who has just been lowered into the grave, emerges alive from it minutes later.

The scene with the farmer and his combine has little to do with real life. The book is not easy reading. Some words must have been invented by the author; I could not find them in my *Funk and Wagnalls* dictionary. The book is neither entertainment nor has it an inspiring message. On the contrary, it seems to encourage a life of sin. It ignores the teachings of the Bible. *Henry Becker, 682 Spruce St., Winnipeg, MB R3G 2Z1* July 3

## Affirmations and questions

The editorial "Your Fears Give You Away" (May 22 issue) is challenging. I suspect most of us are unable to even identify our own fears, much less evaluate them. Your comments are helpful in nudging us in that direction.

We do need encouragement in striving for spiritual maturity, but your lead article, "The Faith Journey," was a disappointment. The author gives little consideration for anything but the human aspect of that journey. What part does the Lord of that faith and that journey play? And I object to her measures of spiritual maturity. For instance, in the paragraph describing mature Christians, she names those "who do not have black and white answers on issues such as abortion, justice, divorce and remarriage, ordination of women, etc." Only a few paragraphs earlier, Hebrews 5:13-14 is quoted, where we are told that maturity is reached by continual practice of the right, becoming accustomed to reaching a decision, distinguishing good from evil. Incidentally, the five translations I consulted before finding the one Ms. Loewen quoted, allow even less possibility for assuming that this practical training should be wholly self-initiated and self-imposed, as she suggests.

I cannot foresee anything like the Christian unity for which Jesus so earnestly prayed in John 17 if we simply "teach ourselves and allow others to teach us what discipleship means for us." That prayer of Jesus and Paul's writings make it plain to me that unity will come through our common submission to Christ as our head. I understand that a mature disciple of Christ is marked not so much by refusing to be "threatened by other people questioning their own faith" but by refusing any authority but Christ and being able to submit to it like a little child. In *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, maturity is achieved by submission, not sophistication. *Anette Eisenbis, Route 2, Box 65, Marion, SD 57043* July 3

# It's not fair

*Fred Unruh*

The church council at St. Menno's Church in Ontario was discussing an invitation to participate in an important seminar in Winnipeg. "I would like to see us send at least four people this year," said John. "Me too. And I think we should also send two young people," said Doris. "They can learn a lot that will help them grow in leadership skills."

"Let's be realistic, folks," said Mike. "It costs at least $300 per person even on bargain airfares. We can't afford sending four people. We have only $400 in the travel budget this year and we've already spent $275 for the music workshop in Elkhart. We'll have to send people who are rich enough to pay their own way."

Pastor Fred jumped in. "If we lived in Altona or Steinbach or in Winnipeg we could send 20 people. But it costs us too much to send even one. It's not fair. And it's not fair that rich people get to learn while others stay home."

*What is a just way to handle travel costs?*

It's not fair. It isn't just. Churches located near Mennonite centers like Winnipeg, Newton, Elkhart and Bluffton have big advantages. It costs 10 to 100 times more for people in Ontario or California or Alberta or Pennsylvania to participate in most events sponsored by our denomination. That's not fair. We have a major injustice issue right in our denomination. And I'm angry that so little is being done to correct it.

The solution isn't so hard to find. But it may be hard to accept for those who have always paid so little in travel costs. And since folks living nearby can exert a lot of pressure by dropping in to complain to staff people, not much seems to be done to correct this injustice.

One solution is a travel pool. Have all people attending the seminar put their travel costs into one pot—into one mutual pool. Then divide the total cost by the number of people attending. Even local folks coming part time could pay their full share. That would do some sensitizing. Result? Everyone pays the same travel cost. Justice! Equality! Surprise!

So someone from Hesston, Kan., pays as much as someone from Bridgewater, S.D., to attend a workshop at Newton. A delegate from North Kildonan in Winnipeg pays the same as someone from Kelowna, B.C., to attend a seminar in Winnipeg.

It would work. It might hurt a little for local folks to pay so much. It hurts us far away folks a lot right now. For us it would sure feel good to pay lots less and know we were paying the same as everyone else.

I'm tired of being penalized for living far away from the Mennonite centers. I'm asking for more justice within the church.

What do you think? I invite you to write the editor to share your opinion on justice in travel costs.

*Fred Unruh, 20 Ramlee Road, St. Catharines, ON L2M 2K5, is a member of the General Conference Commission on Education and serves as pastor of the Grace Mennonite Church.*

# God works faithfully

*Dennis and Dianne Schmidt*

During our first term in Zaire we did not always have the confidence Paul had in writing to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:4-9). In fact on many occasions we felt like giving up. It was difficult to see a purpose in being there, and we were overwhelmed by the problems.

The new pastor's wife was at the door again asking for food and money so she could feed her family. She explained they had no money because her husband was not getting paid. The congregation he was serving was in turmoil because the previous pastor had been accused of embezzlement, removed from the church and defrocked by the governing council of the Mennonite Church in Zaire. Members of this corrupt pastor's tribe left with him and started another congregation nearby. This new pastor was then placed in this fragmented and tense situation. Due to these circumstances he did not receive an adequate salary. Now his wife was coming for help. How were we to respond? Was it our responsibility to support this pastor and his family? We felt confused, frustrated and angry.

*It's not always clear who are the babes in need of "spiritual milk." Sometimes the Zairean Christians seem immature to us, but other times we quickly realize that the immaturity is in us missionaries.*

To our surprise, corruption, struggles for power and tribal factionalism are not only problems in the country and society but also in church structures. In one instance in another denomination the struggle for power between two tribes in one congregation rose to violence, and the local government had to step in and close the church.

These problems and others seemed insurmountable. They were further complicated by an unstable economy. Some of our friends who earned an average salary needed to spend almost all of it on food for their families. They did not have enough money left to pay for bus transportation to and from work and thus walked several miles a day. The dream of owning a motorcycle or bicycle was out of the question.

The hopeless feeling prevalent in the country soon settled in on us as well. What could we do? We were invited by the Zairean Mennonite Church to work in partnership with them, but it was hard for us to see any good in the situation or any hope for improvement.

The Corinthian church also had problems which must have been discouraging to Paul. There were problems of divisions and factions, of immorality, of arrogance, of disorder in worship. The Christian liberty which Paul had preached was misunderstood and used as an excuse for immoral actions. Paul probably wondered at times why he spent a year and a half in Corinth. He had carefully explained the gospel and its implications.

Yet Paul was not overwhelmed or paralyzed by the problems. He begins his first letter to the Corinthians with a prayer of thanksgiving. He praises God that the gospel was confirmed in them. The church was planted and alive. It was richly endowed with spiritual gifts. With this in mind he attacked the problems and tried to help the Corinthians see for themselves the implications of the gospel for their situation.

In the midst of our discouragements in Zaire, God seemed to remind us at various points that he was in control and was indeed building his church. This was brought home to us in our relationships with Zairean brothers and sisters. Their worship services were full of life and enthusiasm. We found people with a deep commitment to Jesus Christ and the church. There was a joy in their being together that overcame the harsh realities of life. They accepted us as one of them and shared with us what they had.

We often felt put to shame and shallow in our own commitment. They had so much to teach us. While we questioned and criticized the pioneer missionaries for their methods and theology, the church in Zaire had been planted and was alive.

There was also a Belgian Catholic priest who befriended us, a longtime missionary to Zaire. As we shared together on different occasions about the problems facing the church in Zaire, he would encourage us to look beyond the problems. He emphasized that it was Christ who was building his church. When sticky situations came our way, he said, we should continue in the confidence that God walks with us. The church is being built and we, along with our Zairian sisters and brothers, have a part in the fulfillment of God's purposes in this world.

*Dennis and Dianne Schmidt have been on North America assignment after their first term in Zaire with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and the Commission on Overseas Mission. They return to Zaire in August.*

## Gospel hope

**Facing Nuclear War** *by Donald Kraybill (Herald Press, 1982, 307 pages)*

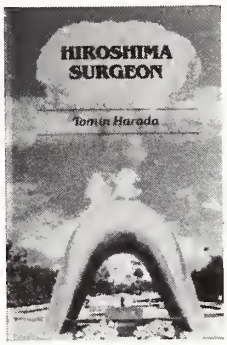
*Reviewed by David H. Janzen, 726 Seward, Evanston, IL 60202*

Since 1945 the prospect of nuclear war has stared us in the face. Yet our lives go on, buying and selling and paying taxes; $1,000 per person per year in the United States goes toward the arms buildup. The Reagan administration claims that 39 years since Hiroshima prove that U.S. nuclear superiority is our best guarantee of security. Jesus prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 30 (Luke 19:41-44) and yet it was two generations before his words came true. A prophet is not a clock watcher, but he discerns the deeper dynamics and course of events, reminding us that we live by God's mercy.

Donald Kraybill, author of the prize-winning book *The Upside-Down Kingdom*, has focused his gifts of prophet, sociologist and pastor to help us face the issues of the nuclear arms race. In easy-to-read terms he surveys the weapons systems of the 1980s to show why both sides are moving toward a first-strike strategy. He analyzes the political and economic engines that keep driving the arms race toward greater complexity, cost and instability. Like the movie *The Day After* he helps us imagine the consequences for the few nuclear survivors. (Since *Facing Nuclear War* was published, studies about the climatic consequences of nuclear war have shown that it would only take 1-4 percent of the U.S.-Soviet nuclear arsenal to plunge the Northern Hemisphere into a half year or more of virtual darkness, causing temperatures to fall like an Arctic winter, resulting in species extinction for most forms of plant and animal life. See Carl Sagan, *Foreign Affairs*, January 1984.)

However, the most significant contribution Kraybill has made is pastoral. The book offers hope, not optimism in some scheme for survival, but gospel hope grounded in Jesus, who faced death and could see beyond it in faithful witness to the Father's love. This is important for those of us who are called to work for an end to the arms race. Can we find the motivation to persist because of Jesus' resurrection and the experience of a kingdom that will never let us down?

I found the "what to do" suggestions creative and geared to many levels of involvement. The question of page 278, "Are you doing as much as you can?" strikes me as weak and guilt-ridden. We need the faith to prepare ourselves for a generation-long campaign to bring the United States to repentance of its nuclear-security idolatry. It is only in a faith communication, pastored in hope, that we can be faithful witnesses over the long haul. Many of us will need to make vocational changes, build covenant relationships with other peacemakers, expecting to give as much to this issue as we would give to raising another child in our family—20 years of sustained service and investment.




Donald Kraybill has written a book that is useful and respectful to the agnostic, Christian nuclear pacifist and other points of view, even as he gives his own reasons for radical Christian nonviolence. The book is written in a useful format for study groups with discussion questions after each chapter.

## A life of service

**Hiroshima Surgeon** *by Tomin Harada, (Faith and Life Press, 1983, 118 pages), translated by Robert L. and Alice R. Ramseyer*

*Reviewed by Sharon Sommer, 128 Columbus Ave., Newton, KS 67114*

Having lived in Japan for several years, I was drawn to *Hiroshima Surgeon* right away. I had visited the Peace Park in Hiroshima and saw only a small part of the devastation the atom bomb created and can only imagine what Harada saw.

Harada has divided his autobiography into three segments. The first deals with his participation in World War II and his return to Hiroshima after the atom bomb was dropped: ". . . [he] found a wasteland where reconstruction was not only not yet in progress, but not even planned." His dream was to build a hospital in the midst of the ruins for victims burned by the atomic blast.

The second segment relates some of the experimental plastic surgery Harada performed on people in Hiroshima. In 1955 he accompanied 25 badly disfigured, young Japanese girls to New York, where these "Hiroshima Maidens" were to undergo plastic surgery. This was a joint undertaking of the Society of Friends (Quakers) and Jewish groups. He ends this part by relating the struggles and joys he shared with his wife before she lost her life to cancer.

Around 1963, Harada became more involved in broader social concerns. During this time he was chairman of the board of directors of the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima. This was the beginning of the third major period of his life. On Feb. 25, 1967, he flew to Vietnam to visit children who had injuries from the war, taking gifts and medicine. He was able to visit hospitals and orphanages. In one chapter he offers a poignant description of the effects of napalm on flesh.

Since returning to Hiroshima, Harada has been able to perform successful plastic surgery on several Vietnam War victims. He has helped people not only through his skill as a plastic surgeon but also as a compassionate friend.

## Choir helps

**A Vocabulary of Devotions for Choristers** *by Betty Ann Ramseth (Choristers Guild, 1983)*

*Reviewed by Anita Bohn, 333 E. 9th, Newton, KS 67114*

These devotions are short and to the point and seem to be usable for choirs of different age levels. The ideas can be adapted for use with young children and may even be used with adult choirs. The choice of topics is catchy and appealing: Grace (notes), Da Capo, Dissonance and Consonance, Rest. There are also some seasonal meditations. But what I especially like is the written-out rhythms, short songs and canons that have many uses. They may be used by Sunday school teachers and worship leaders as well as by choir directors. Though the book is designed for grades 4 through 8, I feel it would be usable with younger children and perhaps with older youth or even adults.

# MEDITATION

## Worship mumbo jumbo

Some young people in Chatham, Ont., visited 14 churches and reported on what they saw and felt. The sermon, the handshakes, the ushering, the architecture, the offering, the choir, were all graded from A to C-minus. A Baptist preacher got an A-plus for his sermon and an A for his handshake. The sermon at the Salvation Army was "well thought out and taken directly from the Bible. . . . It was all simple but dignified and clean."

Some less complimentary remarks included, "The minister sounded more like a history professor than a preacher, a socially conscious church, run-of-the-mill don't-rock-the-boat sermon. Protestant churches are dominated by the middle-aged and elderly, the ushers were lax at finding seats for visitors but had no difficulty collecting money, the audience rapidly recited creeds and tribal mumbo jumbo, unfriendly, made me feel unwelcome."

Such criticism may not be entirely to the point nor entirely fair. God's evaluation of our worship, however, is valid. He sees beyond and beneath the externals.

I was 10 when that was pointed out to me. "I don't get anything out of church," I complained to my sister. The services were in German, there were two sermons and no clock.

"Have you ever prayed that you would?" Helen asked.

"Prayed? What difference would that make to the sermon?"

"Not to the sermon," she said, "to you. Before you go to church, ask God to open your mind and heart to what he wants to say to you."

It made a difference then. And it does now—when I remember. To hear some of the criticism leveled at Sunday morning worship, however, I suspect that few adults are regularly conscious of what makes worship acceptable to God.

"I am sick of your sacrifices," he says in Isaiah 1:11ff. "Don't bring me any more of them. Even your most pious meetings, all are frauds. I want nothing more to do with them. I hate them all, I can't stand the sight of them."

So what's the problem? The Israelites whom the Lord reprimanded through Isaiah had followed the traditional format, meticulously observing the Sabbath and fast days. Yet God declares, "When you pray, I won't look or listen."

Then he gives the reason. Their worship is unacceptable because they have no sorrow for sin. Repentance is a prerequisite for worship.

Our response to daily opportunities to "do good, be fair, help the poor" measure our preparation for worship. Our response to people and their needs, says God, indicates our sincerity when we rise to sing, "O worship the King."

*LaVerna Klippenstein*

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What are your thoughts about unplanned or unscheduled time that comes into your life due to illness, unemployment or whatever? This issue tells us something important about what we often consider uselessness.

We pray for good reading and help in spiritual growth for you as you peruse this issue.


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# editorial

## A cup of cold electrons

*Larry Cornies*

"Dad, something's wrong with the cable," complained my 3-year-old as the screen of our TV set blackened, whisking Spiderman away in midleap.

I leaned around the doorway of the bathroom, shaving cream still covering half my face, and marched over to the set. Flicking the tuner through a half-dozen other stations and finding them still there, I realized he was right. The problem was with the cable, not our TV.

"Be patient," I said. "The program will probably be back soon." Fortunately, within a few minutes, there was the human arachnid again, spinning his yarn.

As I walked to work that morning I thought about my son's remark. The coaxial cable strung into our home already plays a role in his life. By the time he reaches college, the next generation of cable will deliver banking, shopping, travel, education and information services to his home.

The post-industrial, "wired" information society is already here, if only in a relatively modest way. As a church, we have yet to grasp its significance and define our role in it. The coming technologies can *and should* change the way we minister to people, both locally and internationally.

Mennonites and Brethren gathered at Video-Com 84, a consultation on video communications and the church, held at Goshen, Ind., in May to envision some of those changes. Several themes echoed through the three days of meetings. First, the emerging communications technologies should be applied by the church in meeting need. Second, as a church, we dare not adopt an attitude of "intellectual snobbery" about the changes ahead in the way our society functions. The coming technologies can be opportunities for ministry, not luxuries we can do without. Third, we need more education about the information society and its impact on our lives. Finally, we should begin experimenting with church applications for video, cable and computers.

How can the church use these tools to meet human need, to minister to others? The General Conference already has some models. First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind., uses video cameras and recorders to bring its worship services to its elderly members. Players and tapes ("software") are used in the Christian education program. Ken and Anne Rupp, who authored the article in this issue on computers in the home, are pastors at the Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in Goessel, Kan. The same computer that serves their domestic needs has many uses for the church's work (see July 17 issue).

Elsewhere, churches are using the new technologies for numerous other purposes, including record keeping, counseling, teaching and communicating with dispersed members. The possibilities are myriad.

In the information society, however, churches will need to be both users and critics of these technologies. In *Megatrends*, John Naisbitt points to the continuing need for "high touch" to offset the "high tech" environment. "When we fall into the trap of believing . . . that technology will solve all our problems," he writes, "we are actually abdicating the high touch of personal responsibility." Because the society of the near future will be high tech, the role of the church in providing the high touch element in our lives will be amplified. So while we should use these technologies creatively within the church, we must also remain aware that the community of believers may become a personal, inclusive island in a sea of specialization and individuation.

Frances Forde Plude, presenter at Video-Com 84, was right: The new technologies should be applied to meeting human need. The computer and video recorder can be electronic "cups of cold water" in certain situations, enhancing the ministry and effectiveness of the local congregation.

One challenge, however, will be to work at these applications while preserving the church's function as a place and people of worship, healing and celebration, itself a "cup of cold water" in a thirsty, wired world.

# THE MENNONITE

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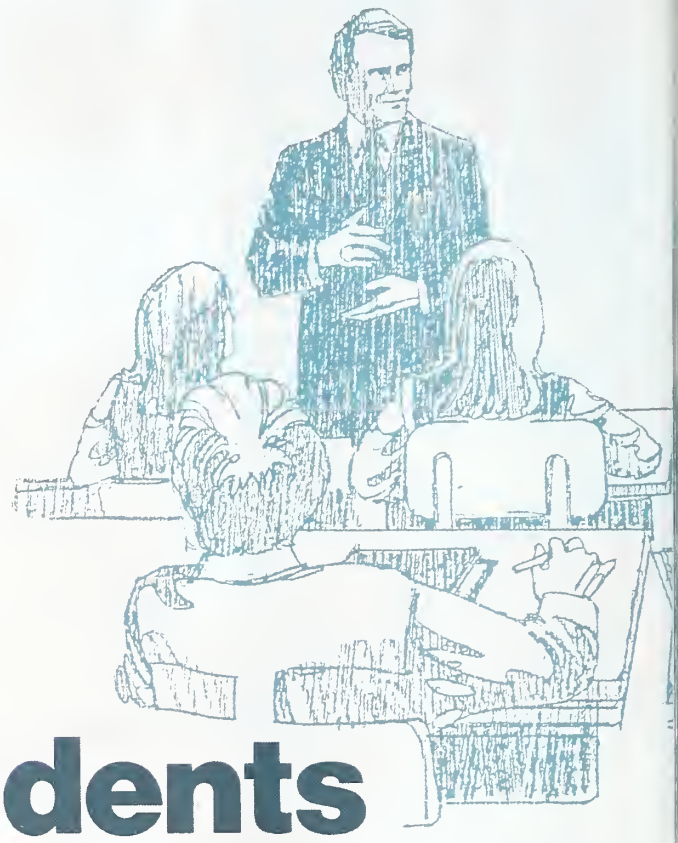
## Back to school

We must not allow the deceptive philosophies of the world to shape our thinking any more than we allow them to shape our ethical conduct



# Christian students

The Christians who strive to be faithful students face many perplexing questions. What is the relation, if any, between Christianity and university study? What does worship in the church have to do with study in the library? How, if at all, does Christianity illuminate psychology, chemistry, philosophy or mechanical engineering? Should Christians approach studies from the same perspective as non-Christians? If not, what is the difference? How can Scripture be a lamp unto the feet of students? Isn't God satisfied if we are faithful in prayer, Bible study, church attendance and witnessing? Unable to resolve such questions, many students lead fragmented lives—Christians in one part and students in the other.

The basic source of student frustration is the church's failure to acquaint them with the comprehensive scope of the biblical message. Before college, Christian students listen to countless sermons, memorize numerous Bible verses and hear the Bible stories many times. They may attend catechism classes and participate in youth activities. The church teaches the basics of Christianity in all of this. But we often severely limit the scope of Christianity by concentrating almost exclusively on personal spirituality. Rarely do we emphasize Christianity's robust, all-embracing perspective on all of life.

This impoverished view of Christianity has drastic consequences. By limiting Christianity to a personal relationship with Christ, students have difficulty appreciating Christ's lordship over the university. By restricting faith to belief in Christ as Savior, they are unable to see how faith and study could be related, since they appear to deal with completely different matters. Lacking a comprehensive view of Christianity, they cannot understand how Scripture could be a lamp unto their feet in the classroom as well as in worship. They may conclude that Scripture deals only with spiritual beliefs and has little or nothing to say about their task as students.

**The Bible's vision is inclusive.** The only way students can escape such crippling frustration and restore wholeness to life is to see the comprehensive vision in the Bible for all of life. Genesis, where God calls creation into existence, to Revelation, where Christ reigns triumphant over creation, stresses the limitless bounds of Scripture. God brought creation into existence, and every dimension of creation must bow before his authority. Isaiah captured the sovereignty of God in his rhetorical questioning:

*Who has gauged the waters in the palm of his hand, or with its span set limits to the heavens? Who has held all the soil of earth in a bushel, or weighed the mountains on a balance and the hills on a pair of scales? Who has set limits to the spirit of the Lord? What counselor stood at his side to instruct him? With whom did he confer to gain discernment? Who taught him how to do justice or gave him lessons in wisdom? (Isaiah 40:12-14* NEB*).*

Not even academic study is beyond his concern and sovereignty.

*Why do you complain, O Jacob, and you, Israel, why do you say, 'My plight is hidden from the Lord and my cause has passed out of God's notice'? (Isaiah 40:27* NEB*).*

God's Word sheds light on the students' walk into every nook and cranny of the world. The Bible's comprehensive vision for all of life is sharply focused in the affirmation that Christ is Lord. This confession is at the heart of Christianity and was the early church's most distinctive mark. Much of the New Testament is devoted to unfolding the meaning of Christ's lordship.

When we confess Christ as Lord we basically confess two truths. All of creation at Christ's ascension was put under his rule:

*Therefore also God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11* NASB*).*

Christ is Lord over all of life.

Second, we confess that since Christ is already Lord over all creation he is worthy to be Lord of our lives. Paul constantly emphasized that Christ's cosmic

# at the university

*Kenneth W. Hermann*

lordship is the ground and guarantee of our salvation:

> *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of his might which he brought about in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly places (Ephesians 1:18-20* NASB*).*

Since we confess Christ as Lord over all of life, this includes lordship over academic life.

Faithful discipleship demands that students allow this biblical vision of wholeness to permeate their entire academic life. Since Christ is Lord of the universe, students must acknowledge Christ's lordship of the classroom, many term papers and numerous exams. Students cannot restrict the limitless scope of Christianity to their personal spiritual life. Academic study must not be viewed as something done in addition to worshiping God. It is a vital dimension of worship. God expects, even commands, that people's minds be used for his honor and glory.

**The Bible's perspective on studies.** The biblical view of wholeness profoundly affects the student's task at a university. Most students see their focus of study as history, sociology, chemistry, philosophy or psychology. This view is reinforced by defining a successful university education as mastery of particular major and minor fields of study. The focus seems to be on the disciplines.

Step back from the bulky texts, confusing theories and mountainous details. What is actually being studied? Is there any course that does not investigate some dimension of God's creation?

> *The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world (Psalm 19:1-4* RSV*).*

University disciplines cannot stand by themselves, they are not autonomous. They illuminate God's creation in its rich diversity and unity. Creation is the focus of authentic studies.

One way to keep study in perspective is to change the disciplines into adjectives. Instead of history, sociology, chemistry, psychology and philosophy, think of historical, sociological, chemical, psychological and philosophical studies. Students of history could say they are studying the historical dimension of God's creation.

This accents five important implications of studying the disciplines within a creational perspective. First, since adjectives raise the question of what they modify, they are a continual reminder that creation is the focus of study. Second, adjectives deprive the disciplines of the independence they have as nouns. Third, adjectives beg to be related to the whole of what they modify. Fourth, adjectives prevent God's richly complex creation from being reduced to only one dimension. Fifth, adjectives guard against the "Christianity and . . ." syndrome prevalent in evangelical circles. University study seen from a creational perspective does not try to build bridges between Christianity and the disciplines; it affects the core of the disciplines.

We have too easily agreed with the world's assumption that the disciplines are independent and have little intrinsic relation to Christianity. It is time we listen first to Paul's warning against conforming our minds to the world's thought systems:

> *I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1-2* NASB*).*

Since our minds are included in our whole being, this dedication cannot be divorced from the use we make of our minds. We must not allow the deceptive

philosophies of the world to shape our thinking any more than we allow them to shape our ethical conduct. Once the world has captured our way of thinking, our vestiges of personal piety often become trivial and impotent weapons of counterattack.

Our whole life is to be lived "coram Deo," before the face of the Lord in faith. Only in this relationship do we find life, fulfillment and completeness. In Adam we defiantly redirected our faith away from God toward alternative sources of fulfillment and wholeness. This is important to understand. All human beings are driven to find meaning, wholeness and salvation in their lives. In the university a search for completeness and meaning outside of God is most highly articulated.

By rejecting God and the wholeness (salvation) he provides, we deny our own and the world's creaturely dependence and proclaim that we can illuminate reality with the light of our own minds. Rather than trusting the God of creation, we trust the idols of our minds.

If you are not to be conformed to these hostile views of creation, you must be alert to their influences in the courses you study and develop a biblically rooted discernment. This is difficult when you are struggling just to keep your head above water, but a beginning must be made.

To get a feel for the many ways that the world's mind influences the courses you study, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the professor's view of humanity? Does she or he believe that your personality is determined by your environment or genetic makeup?
2. What is the professor's view and explanation of evil in the world? Does she or he believe we are victims of external social forces or internal dysfunctions? Remember that a non-Christian must also account for the presence of evil.
3. What relation does the professor see between people and creation? Are people the rulers over creation, striving to manipulate and control it for our ends? Do we become the God whom we reject?
4. Does the professor see a solution to evil in sophisticated technology, manipulation by a political elite or by socioeconomic transformation?
5. How does a professor define his or her subject? Is it defined so narrowly that it deals only with trivial questions? Specialization often insulates people from the fundamental questions of their field and their life.
6. What relationship does the professor see among the different disciplines? If she or he strives for a unified field of knowledge, what basis is offered for the unity—God?
7. What kind of knowledge does the professor believe scientific method can provide? This is an important question since the scientific method, as used by many professors, is more than a special tool of inquiry; it is a way of life. It is "the way, the truth and the life."

University courses involve much more than facts. Faithful stewardship of your mind requires that you go beyond the facts in search of the perspective and the view of reality which give them meaning.

Paul calls Christians to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5b). Not only must we refuse to conform our minds to the world's thoughts, but we must capture them for Christ. Every thought—from algebra to zoology—must become obedient to Christ. All the theories, insights and research methods must be critically evaluated in the light of God's Word. Since the non-Christian professors are also God's creatures, they will discover many valid insights into creation. Christians, however, are called to wrench those valid insights out of their worldly perspective and present them to Christ. That is Christian liberty.

The unavoidable implication is that Christian students must develop a biblical perspective on every dimension of creation. It is true that the Bible is not a textbook of science. But that misses the point. Academic disciplines themselves are abstractions and must not be confused with creational reality itself. Scripture calls these abstractions to account by its comprehensive vision for all of creation. Thus, Christian students do not study creation first with the tools of physics. They study the Bible to gain God's perspective on the field of physics. This prevents them from confusing the structure of creation prescribed by secular physics with the view of creation proclaimed by God. The result will be Christian learning which acknowledges the lordship of Christ over the deep, analytical investigation of God's creation.

**Our common task in the church.** Restoring wholeness to our academic lives can only be achieved within the community of God's people. If undertaken as isolated individuals, it is overwhelming; if shared in the Lord's church, it is manageable. All of us in the body of Christ are called to share in this task according to the gifts given to us by the Lord.

One of the essential steps is for the body of Christ to work more seriously on academic concerns. Here are four practical suggestions to help us: (1) Christian students must seek one another out on campus for mutual support and sharing of insights. (2) They must encourage existing campus organizations to focus on the importance of being Christian students. (3) They must seek out Christian faculty members for their gifts of discernment and counsel. (4) They must acquaint themselves with the contributions of other members of the body to this task.

In our common task of creating a Christian perspective to university study, students will be proclaiming the majesty of the one they serve—the Lord of creation—by making him pre-eminent in all of their life and thoughts. The apostle Paul sums up this unity of doxology and analytical insight—the mark of a Christian perspective—when he triumphantly declares:

> *And he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that he himself might come to have first place in everything (Colossians 1:15-18* NASB*).* •

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In the numbness of grief about a lost assurance that there will be a future, many students experience difficulty in getting things together.

# Awe-full or awful?

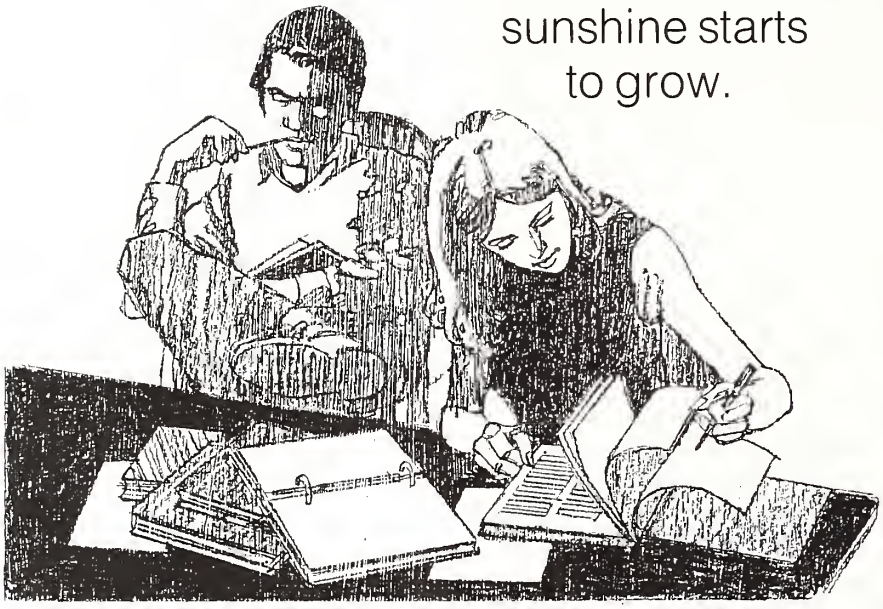
*James L. Dunn*

It is again that time of year when approximately 3,000 General Conference Mennonite students enroll in colleges, universities and Bible schools. Student goals vary, yet an amazing similarity exists. Like among other students, salable skills are the predominant motivator for Mennonite students. They are concerned about grades and career preparation.

**Materialism.** The objective to "become an authority in my field" is considered essential or very important by 72.5 percent of last year's U.S. college entrants, according to the latest survey by the American Council on Education. This study is based on 254,000 students from 489 two-year and four-year schools of higher education. These findings indicate that incoming students are increasingly materialistic. Some 69.3 percent of last year's students said it is important to be "very well off" financially, up from 69 percent the previous year and a record high since the first survey in 1967, when 43.5 percent agreed with that statement. In contrast, an all-time low number of incoming collegiates—44.1 percent—said it is important to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. This percentage is down from 46.7 percent the year before last and from 82.9 percent in 1967.

**Mennonite students.** How do Mennonite youth fare with some of these issues? The Bethlehem '83 Youth Survey stated, "I would take an interesting job with lower pay over a less interesting one with higher pay." Mennonite youth responding at Bethlehem either agreeing or strongly agreeing were 58.2 percent, while 39.1 were uncertain and 8.9 percent disagree or strongly disagree. General Conference Mennonite high schoolers attending Bethlehem '83 rank the following seven issues to be of most personal concern: (1) possibility of a nuclear war—50.1 percent, (2) relationships with the opposite

As we turn from an awful world to the awe-full Jesus Christ, the shadows begin to recede and the sunshine starts to grow.



sex—41.5 percent, (3) use of alcoholic beverages—41.3 percent, (4) what to do after high school—36.3 percent, (5) premarital sex—31.4 percent, (6) registration and the draft—30.4 percent, (7) world hunger—30.2 percent.

**The nuclear jitters.** The September 1983 issue of *Ministries with Young Adults*, a newsletter published by the Lutheran Church in America, quotes student responses when a campus pastor at the University of California told a class about his losing sleep after hearing a prediction that nuclear war would destroy civilization before the end of summer. One student responded, "That soon, huh? I've been thinking it would be about five years," whereupon nearly everyone in the room nodded in agreement.

A *U.S. News & World Report* national poll indicates that nearly 30 percent of college students expect a nuclear war in their lifetime. This is compared to nearly 25 percent of high school students, according to a poll of 2,000 students conducted the fall of 1983 by Educational Communications of Lake Forest, Ill.

There is certainly a contrast of opinion whether widespread students' anticipation of nuclear war actually changes their lives. From nuclear war to personal relationships, many campus ministers say there is a sense of gloom pervading the attitudes of today's college students. An informal survey among Lutheran campus ministers reports large increases in the number of students seeking counseling.

In contrast, the *U.S. News & World Report* survey reports that 75.2 percent of students say that while they are concerned about nuclear war, fears about it have not changed their lifestyles, career aims or work habits. Just 5.3 percent expressed an "eat, drink and be merry" response. "More typical of those who do admit to changing their behavior are the 12 percent of students who say they have drawn closer to family and church" (April 16, p. 34).

Intellectually most students know we are in desperate straits, but emotionally many remain unconnected to the reality that the nuclear threat challenges our survival. Like most of U.S. and Canadian society, students are numbed by the grief of a lost assurance of a future for ourselves and our descendants.

Students cope with the possibility of total planetary annihilation in several ways. Many are experiencing denial or displacement. ("Why be concerned about such a remote possibility since I can't do anything about it anyway?") Some retreat into ignorance. Others focus on problems that seem manageable and do not leave such a sense of helplessness.

Some develop cosmic or religious acceptance. ("Even if life is destroyed here, it probably exists elsewhere in the universe," and, "It is God's plan for this sinful world.") There can be a flight into personal survival ("I'll build a shelter") or a minimizing of the seriousness of the problem. ("A limited nuclear exchange is possible, even a viable option.")

**Mennonite schools.** As students go back to schools of higher education, many go to our Mennonite church schools. There gifted and thoroughly committed faculty and administrators help students as they work through some of life's basic human needs—identity, community, power. The questions students often ask at our church schools relate to: (1) personal identity—who am I? (2) community—where am I loved? (3) personal power—how can I make a difference?

**Hope for today's youth.** Workers with students and young adults, whether at Mennonite schools or elsewhere, experience an annual upbeat of anticipation as they plan and develop new relationships with newcomers and returnees to the campuses. Their ministry with young adults is to help them become more rooted in their faith and religious heritage. Particularly in times of uncertainty, students need to experience good models of Christian teachers who live what they teach. Today's youth seek an authentic hope which can be seen in action.

Despair and apathy about this awe-full world leads not only to cynicism but to blatant faithlessness. In contrast, hope and challenge in this Christ-redeemed world magnetically draws out from us and indwells the gift of God's faithfulness with us. As the academic year 1984-85 begins, let us not take our cues for developing life's wisdom from the knowledge of humankind. Rather, especially for times like these, let us amplify the Jesus way of good news for our day. •

# The year of release is upon us

*Brenda Suderman*

How can dessert at lunchtime lead into a major issue such as the responsible consumption of limited food resources? In an ongoing way many of us struggle with the fine line between consumption and overconsumption. Simple living is becoming more complicated, particularly when we become more aware of the implications of our menu choices.

"Twice-a-day-desserts" focused the issue of responsible eating for the boarding students of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (Winnipeg) over a year ago. Students were asked to respond to the desserts issue—among other questions—on a questionnaire, and the responses were as varied as the students attending CMBC.

My interest and response in this issue was suddenly intensified by the reactions I noticed. Being familiar with cutting back and the *More-with-Less Cookbook*, I am in the process of changing my attitude toward food. Most of us view food tastes and preferences in a personal manner. We feel we have the privilege and the right to determine when, how, what and how much we eat. Any outside interest in our eating habits is an unwelcome intrusion. Along with the perspective that our food preferences are personal often comes a reluctance to address another's tastes and eating habits.

The sentiment "This is what I think but I can't tell others what to do" results in ambiguous responses. We struggle with the same issue but are often reluctant to lead out in formulating solutions. Part of our reluctance stems from the reasoning that we should enjoy God's gift of abundant food. In light of his blessing it is difficult to comprehend the relationship between our overconsumption and someone else's starvation.

We are not pioneers in dealing with this problem in light of the needy surrounding us. This was a real situation for the Israelites especially after they had settled in the land of promise and were experiencing the blessings of God (Yahweh) in a new way. Their book of law, Deuteronomy, was their guide in dealing with this issue. Deuteronomy's laws were all-encompassing. Israel's confession of faith, the "shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) spoke of a wholistic relationship as expressed in the total commitment of one's person—heart, soul and might—to Yahweh.

Deuteronomy called the Israelites to faithfulness in all of life. Yahweh was to be central. He was the giver of justice, and one form of his justice was expressed in the releasing of debts every seventh year. Originally the year of release was applied to agriculture and letting the land lie fallow every seventh year (Exodus 23:10f). Deuteronomy extended this concept to a personal and individual area in the life of the Israelite people—that of the accumulation of wealth. The year of release developed to include the release of debts between fellow Israelites (Deuteronomy 15:1-11). Not only were debts to be canceled; Israelites were also to lend freely to those in need within their land in spite of the imminence of the seventh year.

The concept of release showed the Israelites that ultimately Yahweh was in control in all aspects of their lives. To love him with their whole beings meant to express this concretely in their lives. Although economic matters were personal and individual, this law showed that these were also larger issues. In granting a release, Israelite creditors were not able to become progressively wealthier while others sank deeper into debt until forced slavery was the only alternative. Being commanded to cancel debts and help those in need was an indication to the Israelites that Yahweh's ways were not theirs. Yahweh himself placed the final limitation on the accumulation of wealth and power (Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Deuteronomy, Jeremiah*, Proclamation Commentaries, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978, p. 42).

What is the relationship of twice-a-day-desserts to the year of release in the Old Testament? We too are to love God with our entire being and to express this love. Our eating habits are one expression of total obedience. No area of our lives is too personal; we must obey in all aspects and express this obedience. Eating responsibly is one symbol of our faithfulness, just as canceling debts was a symbol of Israelite faithfulness. Sharing our food with others can help to equalize an uneven situation, and it can prevent the obese from gaining even more weight and the starving from dying. We must act to prevent many of our neighbors from selling themselves into slavery for lack of food.

The consumption of food has become a global issue and rightly so. Eating is part of our being, and when we are obedient to Yahweh we need to express this obedience with our entire being. The seventh year is upon us and we are called to release God's blessings upon us also to others around us.

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# The war is not over

*Edmund Pries*

People keep telling me that World War II ended at midnight, May 8, 1945, but I don't believe them. I can't. I see it still going on.

It was 1943 and my grandmother Margarete and her husband, Isaak Dyck, had just arrived in Germany with their four children after fleeing the Stalin purges in an effort to eventually get to Canada. Their hope and family unity were short-lived. In January 1945 the Nazis sent Isaak to the Russian Front at gunpoint.

"You may be assured that your father won't kill anyone, no matter what," he said. "I would sooner shoot into the air than point my gun at another person." At that he left, never again to be seen by them. The last news they received was that Isaak and his comrades had been encircled by the Russian Army.

With Isaak's leaving, my grandmother's struggle began. She was 33, her oldest child, Neti (my mother), was 10, and the youngest, Peter, 1½, with Willi and Gretel in between. They fled from place to place, hiding under trains in the countryside as U.S. and British bombs exploded all around them. Finally they arrived at a farm in Bavaria where in exchange for dawn to dusk labor my grandmother was able to receive lodging and some meager food rations for her family.

In 1947 the family was taken by Mennonite Central Committee to Paraguay on the Dutch vessel *Volendam*. There Margarete Dyck with her children carved an existence out of the jungle through some farming, doing odd jobs and receiving support through MCC from a family in Ohio.

Many years have passed since then, and we can look back and say that Oma Dyck led her family well. A few things have changed. She now lives in retirement in Winnipeg. Her children are in careers worldwide, and three have married. In addition she has nine grandchildren (two of whom are married) and has received her first great-grandchild.

But the story isn't over yet. Some things have yet to change. Every day my grandmother hopes and prays that she will receive news of Isaak. Is he dead or alive? No one knows. Perhaps he is one of the "unknown soldiers." Was he killed in action or taken captive? If he was taken captive, was he among the small percentage who survived captivity? If he survived captivity, is he also waiting, hoping and praying, or did he give up and remarry?

*Like a watch that never ends, you wonder if this time he'll suddenly appear in the crowd. Will there be a letter? Is he alive? Love believes . . . hopes . . . endures. . . .*

Over the years grandma has been counseled by some to get a death certificate and to remarry. She always insists there is a chance that Isaak is still alive, and as long as that possibility exists she cannot become unfaithful and break her marriage vows. In honesty to Isaak she cannot get a death certificate, not until she knows. Truly, the pain of not knowing is greater than knowledge of the worst.

The living hope of my grandmother has taught me the full meaning of 1 Corinthians 13:7, "Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (NIV). In her I see that true love never gives up. This year marks 38 years of waiting. I am reminded of the sick man who lay for 38 years beside the pool of Bethesda waiting for someone to carry him into the water (John 5:1-15). Jesus came along and healed him.

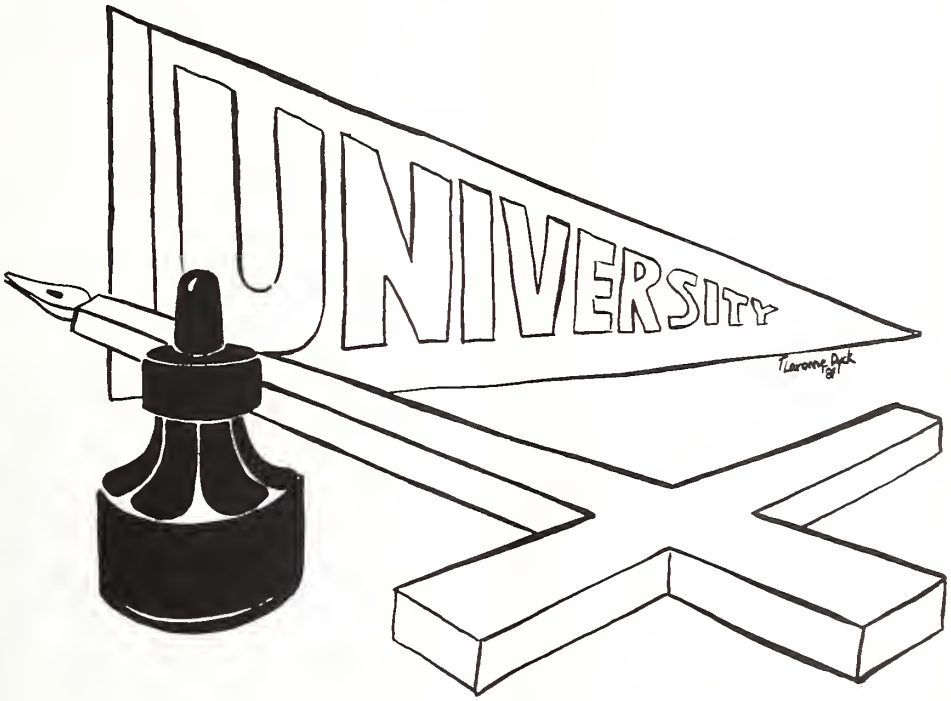
How many years will my grandmother need to wait, hoping each day that this might be the day her prayers are answered? How many others like her are waiting every day for their loved ones to return and the painful separation of war to be healed? How long before we realize that war and its effects are ongoing and that wars are never over?

Today I remember grandmother who is once again waiting, hoping, praying.

*Edmund Pries graduated from the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., in spring and will become pastor at Nutana Park Church, Saskatoon.*

# Campus counselor sees hope

*Bill W. Dick*




Keen competition seems to be an all-pervasive characteristic of the modern secular university. Students encounter the challenge of competition when they enter a certain academic program and it keeps rearing its ugly head at every point along the way—in daily assignments, midterms and final exams.

Crippling confusion sets in for some students as they are faced with a smorgasbord of academic offerings. Many find it difficult to decide which program to choose. Often choices are made on the basis of rumored prospects for availability of jobs with high pay but with little or no attention being given to their personal preferences in terms of aptitudes, interests and values.

The most crucial challenge in the eyes of many students centers upon planning their lives beyond their studies both as to career direction and choice of a life partner. In a setting that provides maximum freedom of interpersonal contacts, many students enter into numerous intense relationships during their years on campus. For some these prove to be invaluable learning experiences, while others are left with unresolved hurts, with bitter disappointments and with a jaundiced view of permanent relationships.

Students come for counseling with any of the above concerns and more. Students with a Christian orientation or background appreciate the option of meeting with a counselor who will both respect and deal constructively with their faith and values.

How are students of Mennonite background faring as they face these challenges? My overall impression is that Mennonite students are doing amazingly well as they confront the challenges of a secular university, though not without serious struggles. A caring Christian community (such as provided by Conrad Grebel College on the campus where I work) plays a significant role in serving as a supportive catalyst.

In the realm of relationships I see Mennonite students acting with high levels of genuine concern and responsibility. In the face of increasing numbers of marriage breakdowns all around us, it is an encouraging sign when couples come voluntarily for premarital counseling with the clear intent of enhancing their chances of sustaining a successful permanent relationship.

In the area of career choice, many students with Christian convictions come for counseling in order to reconcile their values and personal preferences with their academic and career choices.

*Bill W. Dick, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G1, has served as a campus counseling psychologist for the past two decades at universities in Ontario, first at York and now at Waterloo.*

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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**What would you do with $1,000?** Adoniram Judson, after 40 years of missionary service in Burma, once asked a friend as they passed a Christian college. "Do you know what I would do with $1,000 if I had it?" "Yes, you would give it to foreign missions," his friend said. "No, I would put it into an institution like that," Judson said, pointing to the Christian college. "Building Christian colleges and filling them with Christian students is raising the seed corn of the world."

**"Almost half of single-parent families** in Canada headed by women live below the poverty line," says June Callwood in the May 11 (Toronto) *Globe and Mail.* "The lives of their children will be shorter due to poor nutrition; the family is more prone to accident, violence and disease, less likely to succeed in school and employment, more likely to be candidates for stress-related breakdowns. Most welfare recipients are women and children. . . . They live on incomes which are slightly more than a quarter of those of the average Canadian. . . . Women in Canada earn less than 60 cents for every dollar that men earn."

# NEWS

## Conflict management seminars made available

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Mennonite Conciliation Service, a project of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section, is expanding to make its seminars more available to congregations and groups wishing to learn about conflict management. Recently, two seminar themes have been especially popular.

"Conflict in the Congregation" is a seven- to nine-hour seminar designed to help congregations and their leaders examine the role of conflict in church life and learn effective ways of responding. Another popular seminar has been "Mediation Skills," an intensive 18-hour seminar which teaches participants the practical skills of mediating between individuals.

Due to heavy demand for the seminars, MCS has trained several individuals to assist director Ron Kraybill in conducting these events. Dennis Koehn, located in Goshen, Ind., will be available to churches and groups in the Midwest. Koehn holds a master of divinity degree and heads a private consulting firm. "Dennis has received high marks from churches and groups that have worked with him as seminar leader," comments Kraybill.

Based in Fresno, Calif., Ron Claassen is providing seminars on the West Coast. A former businessman who went on to seminary and the ordained ministry, Claassen is associated with the Fresno-based Christian Conciliation Service, which mediates disputes among Christians in the Fresno area.

John Paul Lederach, a former mission worker in Spain under Mennonite Board of Missions, will help lead mediation skills seminars. Lederach is studying conflict management in a doctoral program at the University of Colorado in Boulder and has been an active mediator and trainer with several mediation programs in the Denver area.

*Ron Kraybill, right, leads conciliation skills seminar at Salunga, Pa., in October 1983.*

According to Kraybill, both seminars have developed over several years and have been warmly received by participants. "Conflict in the Congregation" has been conducted in over 15 locations throughout the United States and Canada. "I wish everyone in my church had been here," wrote a Manitoban at the end of a recent workshop. "Too bad our church didn't know a year ago what we now know," commented a Midwestern pastor after a Friday night to Saturday afternoon seminar.

This seminar covers several topics: a self-assessment exercise which helps participants to understand their personal response to conflict, a Bible study which examines conflict in the New Testament and the life of the early church, a skill development section titled "How to Be Effective When People Are Angry," and a section devoted to airing opinions and making decisions about tension-laden congregational issues.

Although this seminar focuses on church conflicts, participants frequently find that what they learn carries over into their personal lives. "It's a rare seminar," observes Kraybill, "that someone doesn't come to me afterward and say, 'This is going to have a real impact on my marriage.' "

Participants in the Mediation Skills seminar have included community service workers, pastors and elders, business people and community mediation center volunteers from throughout the United States and in four Canadian provinces.

Some participants are mediators in local MCS-related mediation centers which provide mediation as a way to help neighbors, businesses or families resolve conflicts without going to court. Others who receive the training are those interested in improving their reconciling skills for day-to-day living.

Costs for the two seminars are calculated on a donation basis. MCS currently suggests a donation of $150 per day to provide leaders for seminars, plus travel expenses. "But that is only a ball park figure," stresses Kraybill. "We just recover costs at this level. We encourage a higher figure for groups able to afford it, and that enables us to accept a lesser amount from groups that cannot. The bottom line is that there is great need for committed, skillful peacemakers who also know inner peace, and we would like to help meet that need."

Groups wishing further information on these or other mediation services are encouraged to contact the MCS coordinating office at Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th St., Box M, Akron, PA 17501.

**Researchers have noted a link** between tougher drunk driving laws and an increase in jail suicides. The crackdown on drunk drivers is putting many people behind bars for the first time. Researchers believe the feelings of guilt and anxiety these individuals must cope with, compounded by a forbidding cell environment and the effects of alcohol (a depressant), increases the likelihood of suicide, which, typically occurs within the first three hours of confinement.

**The 14 Christian schools** in the Muria Mountain area of North Central Java, which are owned and operated by the Java and Muria Mennonite-affiliated synods, are thriving. During 1983, 745 Javanese youth were able to continue study at these schools from elementary through senior high levels with help received from the Mennonite Central Committee sponsorship program. Seventy-two additional students received scholarships for tertiary education. No religious distinction is made in determining the neediest candidates for assistance, but Java and Muria synods view their schools as a means of spreading the Christian faith.

**Team building for congregation staff members** will be the focus of a workshop on Sept. 5 at Prairie View Mental Health Center in Newton, Kan. The workshop is designed to help groups of staff work together better as a team. The fee is $25 per person or a maximum charge of $100 per congregation. To register or for more information write Prairie View Mental Health Center, Box 467, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-2400.

# Mennonite Men's tenth man plan takes on first project

Newton, Kan. (GCMM)—Letters are being sent out by David Quiring, treasurer of General Conference Mennonite Men, asking participants in the Tenth Man Church Building Plan to send their first $100 contribution to help the San Francisco Chinese Mennonite Church buy a meeting place. The plan is for 500 people or groups to send in $100 each that will total a donation of $50,000 toward the purchase of a building that will cost $210,000. In addition, there will be considerable remodeling costs.

The congregation is meeting in a church building with high rental costs and will be able to make a considerable savings if that rental money can be applied to a building purchase. The congregation plans to raise $20,000 toward the purchase cost and some additional money toward the remodeling cost.

The building being purchased was used by another congregation which outgrew it. The location of the building is in the new Chinatown area of San Francisco and is on a main traffic artery accessible by public transportation.

*Pastor Joshua So in front of San Francisco Chinese Mennonite's building*

Thus far Mennonite Men has about 180 people listed in the Tenth Man Church Building Plan and hopes to enroll 320 more.

# Urbana '84 scholarships being offered by two Mennonite groups

Newton, Kan., and Elkhart, Ind. (GCMC)—"The world is coming to Urbana '84" proclaims the colorful poster announcing the 14th Inter-Varsity Student Missions Convention, Dec. 27-31. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will host the 18,000 Urbana '84 college and university students, faculty, pastors and missionaries.

Nearly 400 will be Mennonites. On a per capita basis, more Mennonites attend these triennial missionary conventions than people from any other denomination.

Again this year the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church are offering Urbana '84 scholarships to students on a first request basis. These $50 scholarships are offered to help make it possible for all Mennonites who desire to participate to be at Urbana '84.

Nestled in "Mennonite row" among more than 100 mission boards, eight Mennonite mission agencies will be represented in the UI Armory, equipped not with military hardware but with displays, brochures and staff telling the story of Mennonite missions and service opportunities throughout the world.

A special brochure is being produced by the Mennonite Urbana Planning Group, a committee appointed by the Council of International Ministries, to share the Mennonite vision of faith and life with Urbana '84 participants.

A gathering of Mennonites will be held one afternoon to build community and process Mennonite involvement in this student missions conference.

Featured Urbana '84 speakers Luis Palau, Gordon MacDonald, George McKinney, Billy Graham, Pete Hammond and John Kyle will challenge the students to spring into the world as the "Faithful in Christ Jesus."

Mennonite students applying for Urbana '84 scholarships should write to their respective denomination. James Derstine, Student and Young Adult Services, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, is responsible for the Mennonite Church. James Dunn, General Conference Mennonite Church, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, is coordinating the GC program. Urbana '84 registration information is also available from these offices.

**Emmanuel Mennonite Church** of Gainesville, Fla., is interested in making contact with anyone going to the University of Florida. The church is willing to assist students with locating housing or other general needs. Contact the pastor, Phil Kniss, at 3205 N.W. 14th St., Gainesville, FL 32605, (904) 377-6577.

**The Greater Los Angeles Mennonite Council,** working with Mennonite Central Committee, has established an immigration program which will primarily offer assistance to Central American refugees in pursuing proper documentation. Between 300 and 400 people relating to the Mennonite churches in Southern California are undocumented. The goal of the program is to make as many church members as possible aware of the existing legal channels for receiving documentation.

**Calcutta, India**—A year ago an 18-year-old girl named Sriti and her old and sick father came to the Mennonite Central Committee office here, seeking safe custody for the daughter. Living in utter poverty and without a mother and wife, the two had been taken advantage of by others. After hearing their story, MCC staff made arrangements for Sriti to be immediately admitted to the All Bengal Women's Union Home, where girls are given shelter and provided with either schooling or vocational training. Sriti is currently completing high school and being trained in weaving. In 1983 MCC supported the home with financial assistance for 56 girls.

# Mennonite workers help rebuild houses in war-torn Chad

N'Djamena, Chad (MCC)—In the southern section of N'Djamena near the Chari River stands a neat mudbrick house occupied by David and Justine Foxall, Mennonite Central Committee country representatives. Many of their neighbors had their mudbrick homes destroyed during the Chadian revolution which ended in 1982. An interchurch committee, with funding and personnel from several international donors, is helping these families rebuild.

During the fighting, city residents fled into the countryside. When they returned last year they found their doors and roofs vandalized or removed. Without roofing and maintenance, the mudbrick mud-plastered walls were crumbling in the heavy rains. Thousands of homes in N'Djamena stand in various states of disrepair. The families have returned but do not have the money to rebuild.

In early 1982, MCC West Africa disaster coordinator Phil Witmer investigated the situation in N'Djamena. A local 17-member housing rehabilitation committee was established with representation from five local evangelical groups. MCC, French Mennonites, World Vision and the government of the Netherlands have all provided financial support for the rebuilding project.

The Foxalls, originally from Winnipeg, say, "We feel good that the committee is functioning on its own and that we are simply advisers." The committee has carried out an extensive survey of the homes of church members. They kept a careful record documenting each family's needs. Over 4,600 homes need repair, but so far only 192 of these houses have been repaired.

Each family is given approximately $75 for repair, which enables them to replace four to six rooms with mud roofs or one room with a more permanent tin roof. Labor is supplied by family and friends. Most families choose to buy the tin roof.

*During the 1982 war in Chad, looters took roofs, windows and doors from houses, leaving the mudblock walls vulnerable to the rains.*

Workmen are repairing the wall and roof next to the Foxall's house. One worker mixes the mud, another carries mud bricks and mud up to a third who places the bricks to form a wall. When the bricks reach the level of the overhead wooden rafters, the tin roof is nailed on.

Throughout N'Djamena many people can be seen resurfacing their mudbrick walls. The mud plaster looks neat when finished, but only lasts for about two rainy seasons and needs continuous maintenance. In the spring many families worked hard to get the roofing on before the heavier June to September rains began.

The repair work in N'Djamena is far from complete. In July, David Evans, MCC worker from Clark's Summit, Pa., became the new project coordinator for the support committee. *Art Meyer*


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THE MENNONITE
ASSOCIATED MENNONITE
biblical SEMINARIES EDITION

AMBS Bulletin
August 14, 1984

# 1984 graduates

## Goshen Biblical Seminary

**Master of Divinity**

*Dagne Assefa* . . . when the door opens will serve the church at home in Ethiopia. "The seminary has sharpened my awareness that I am, both as a believer and a Christian minister, a servant to God and his church and a peacemaker in the world."

*David O. Bell* . . . as pastor of the Science Ridge Mennonite Church, Sterling, Ill., desires "to preach, teach and model the Good News to persons both inside and outside the family of God. In Millard Lind's Pentateuch class I came to see how God revealed himself to humankind as recorded in Genesis 1-11 in relationship to the surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures. I appreciated the community love and support after the death of our 3-year-old son Justin in December 1982."

*Donald L. Brenneman* . . . after pastoring in Goshen, Ind., and serving in various assignments in Argentina, with Marilyn, his wife, will minister among Hispanics in south Texas. Appreciated the recharging of the year of studies. "All my teachers were younger than I am."

*William Lawrence Elster* . . . was married in July and plans to begin pastoring in September. "Living in the dormitory and becoming friends with those I lived with was an important part of my life at AMBS."

*Firman J. Gingerich* . . . as pastor of Bonneyville Mennonite Church, Bristol, Ind., seeks "to develop a mutual trusting relationship with the congregation in bringing God's redemptive message to bear on our personal experiences in family, congregation and community." He values "the friendship, interaction and challenge that I experienced in MDiv seminar with Ross Bender as leader." He found numerous instances of classes in biblical and practical studies and in church history and theology, where the great biblical themes of grace, redemption, discipleship and others were reinforced.

*Loren L. Johns* . . . continues as co-pastor of Blough Mennonite Church, near Johnstown, Pa., and is becoming overseer of two congregations in Scottdale, Pa. "A major goal is to build spiritual community in an old ethnic Mennonite community." He looks forward to again working with David Mishler as co-pastor and business partner.

*Linford Dale Martin* . . . when his wife, Elaine, completes studies in 1985, will co-pastor the Kingview Mennonite Church in Scottdale, Pa. He will continue next year as seminary co-op bookstore manager. He wants to translate studies "into relevance for the everyday life of the people we will be working with. I hope to communicate that curiosity, questions, study, reflection and sharing are not only for the educational institution but for all who are serious about following Christ."

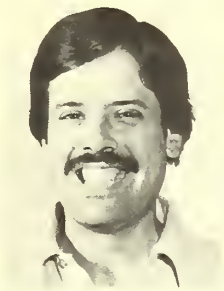
*Mary Anne Buller Miller* . . . completed studies in off-campus term. Plans to take further studies in a pastoral training institute.

*Mark Richard Wenger* . . . as assistant pastor of Forest Hills Mennonite Church, Leola, Pa., plans to preach and teach as well as assist in general pastoral duties—and learn from pastor Lester Graybill and explorations on his own. "Attending Belmont Mennonite Church has been a highlight during seminary. I have enjoyed living in a household of students. Besides, there is nothing like a finished paper at the end of hard study."

**Certificate in Theological Studies**

*Hansulrich Gerber* . . . becomes pastor of the Mennonite Church in Bern, Switzerland. Anticipates "promoting awareness of the church being Christ's body in the world: witnessing and working for reconciliation, liberation, and peace and justice." He found in the seminary community and courses new perspectives of the Good News, especially in terms of community, missions and peace, and appreciated "meeting people with Second and Third World experience."

*Assefa*


*Bell*

*Brenneman*

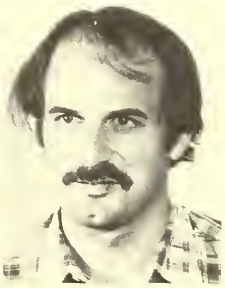
*Elster*

*Gingerich*

*Johns*

*Martin*

*Wenger*



*Raul Oscar Garcia* . . . continues as public high school principal and co-pastor of the Pehuajo Mennonite Church in Pehuajo, Argentina, and serves as president of the Argentine Mennonite Church, 1984-85. In the various assignments he seeks "to be useful in God's hands to fulfill his will in our circumstances." During January he enjoyed C. J. Dyck's interterm course, Anabaptist History and Theology, the annual pastors' workshop on preaching, and "worship in the chapel."

*Lynda Ruth Hollinger* . . . will attend Tulane University in New Orleans to study public health and tropical medicine in anticipation of returning to Africa with Mennonite service and mission agencies. At seminary, "living in a household has been one of the special experiences of my whole life. It seems miraculous how seven people unknown to each other can become such a caring community. Supper conversations are every bit as educational as lectures and classroom discussions." In classes she notes, "Willard Swartley's class on Mark, and Gayle Gerber Koontz's Women and Men: History and Vision were challenging and stretching. I especially appreciated the spirit of mutual learning among the profs and their students."

*Lloyd P. Miller* . . . in September begins a master of business administration program at Indiana University at South Bend. "Beyond IU I want to be involved with church programs in Third World countries." At seminary he appreciated "the challenge of thinking in theological terminology instead of the concrete business world."

*Shirley E. Yoder* . . . returns to Western Mennonite School, Salem, Ore., as teacher of English and Bible. During sabbatical at AMBS "I especially appreciated those times when an ordinary lecture or classroom discussion became for me an epiphany—a moment of grace that turned the ordinary into the divine."

*Harvey Yoder* . . . returns to pastor Zion Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va., and teach Bible and social studies at Eastern Mennonite High School. He appreciated the stimulation of study and campus life during the first sabbatical "in almost too many years to remember."

**Certificate in Theology**

*Eldon Kennell* . . . assumes new involvement in the chaplaincy at Pontiac (Ill.) Correctional Center. He found the time at seminary a growing experience. "As such it was necessary to adopt a more flexible theology, but I am aware that some call it 'drift.' I want to be sensitive to the feelings of others, even if I don't agree. What could one possibly gain by alienating oneself from another?" In one-to-one contacts and Bible study groups and related assignments at Pontiac he wants to help inmates "move toward wholeness so that they can become responsible."

*Harold James Smith* . . . became pastor of the Hopedale (Ill.) Mennonite Church, and intends to work closely with the Illinois Conference and congregational lay leadership in developing a greater priority of shared ministry to extend "the rich variety of gifts found within the body of believers." He found meaningful the use of students during the three-times-a-week chapel services and "the willingness of faculty and staff to share in the personal lives of students."

*Garcia*

*Gerber*

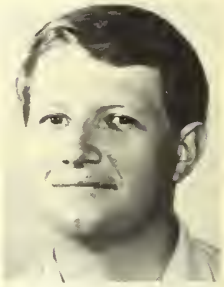
*Hollinger*

*Miller*

*S. Yoder*

*H. Yoder*

*Kennell*


*Smith*

## Mennonite Biblical Seminary

**Master of Divinity**

*David W. Bartow* . . . will continue to serve as pastor of Upper Milford Mennonite Church, Zionsville, Pa. He graduated in 1967 and over the years has taken courses for seminary credit, which has allowed him to upgrade the BD degree to an MDiv. From seminary years 1964-67, he recalls, "I grew in my understanding of the Scriptures and of our Mennonite heritage. I feel deeply indebted to the professors at AMBS who helped me to grow in this way."

*Gerry William Derksen* . . . will teach at a Bible school in Zaire with Mennonite Brethren Missions/Services. At seminary he found "community support and help in discernment and decision making concerning our future assignment." He values "learning to see shalom as a process rather than a state of being."

*Paul Dyck* . . . will serve as interim pastor at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, for one year. He worked as a departmental assistant in Bible. A significant event was "spending our first year of marriage at seminary." He especially appreciated Gospel of Mark taught by Willard Swartley and Communication and Oral Interpretation by June Alliman Yoder.

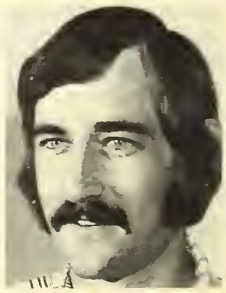
*Steven Ralph Estes* . . . is working as an orderly while seeking a congregational pastorate. "I envision a congregational setting in which to serve and praise God, in which my wife may fulfill her ministry of nursing, and in which I may also continue Mennonite historical

*Derksen*

*Dyck*

*Estes*

*Franz*



*Fretz*

*Martens*

*McFarren*

*Pries*

*Lugibihl*

*Heidebrecht*

*Stueben*

*Thiessen*

*Velazco*

*Wiebe*

interests." He served as K-group facilitator for three years and values "the experience of relating to so many people in so many ways" and "New Testament Greek and Biblical Hebrew classes as foundational for biblical study."

*Werner Franz* . . . will teach in the Mennonite Bible Seminary (CEMTA) near Ascunción, Paraguay. He anticipates being "part of a process where Mennonites in Paraguay search anew who we are as Christians, Mennonites and citizens of our country." At seminary "I have enjoyed getting to know the American way of life. I have been encouraged and inspired by the way some Mennonites struggle to live a Christian life in the face of the temptations posed by the North American lifestyle."

*Mark Jonathan Fretz* . . . has no definite plans. "I expect to teach Bible and biblical languages in a church-related school." A long-range goal is to complete requirements for a doctorate in biblical language study. At seminary he valued "developing personal relationships with the professors . . . the closeness that developed over the course of the semester within particular classes."

*Weldon Martens* . . . has accepted a call from the Pleasant Valley Mennonite Church, Harper, Kan., to serve as pastor. "I anticipate working with the congregation to call members to greater faithfulness and obedience while at the same time sharing this commitment with others in the hope that they may respond to the good news of Christ." He appreciated "the integration of spiritual development and growth with academic learning. Joining the way of the mind with the way of the heart is a discipline that will ably sustain me in ministry."

*Partick J. McFarren* . . . assumes pastoral and youth work with the Northern Cheyenne Mennonite churches in southeastern Montana. "I hope to develop as a minister, care giver and disciple. I expect to become part of a caring and maturing Christian community, simply available as an instrument of God. . . . My world has been expanded and enriched by the various individuals who have touched my life. Academically I have been challenged and encouraged in developing a pastoral identity."

*James E. Picht* . . . completed his last year of studies in the SCUPE program in Chicago.

*Edmund Pries* . . . will serve as pastor of Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, together with his wife, Joan, who will serve as minister of music part time. Focus of the ministry will be preaching, teaching, creative worship experiences, as well as counseling and listening. "Together with the congregation we hope to discover new ways in which God can lead us together as we seek to serve in the name of Christ." He appreciated "the MDiv seminar process of mutual evaluation, gift discernment and understanding God's calling."

*Mary Beth Berkshire Stueben* . . . is seeking a pastoral ministry assignment. "I look forward to the opportunity to convey the power and excitement of the biblical message." At seminary "I've been set on fire by immersion in the biblical texts and the study of their cultural background. In addition to language and Bible courses, the opportunity to study one semester in Jerusalem has been a gift beyond measure."

*Victor George Thiessen* . . . in 1985, along with his wife and another couple, will start an Anabaptist study center/youth hostel/Bible school in Nova Scotia. "Our vision is for this effort to be inter-Mennonite. I plan to teach in the Bible school, which will have an informal, one-year, non-credit program with an emphasis on the faith development of post-highschoolers." He valued "dialoguing with students in the lounge about theology and future plans, the church and ministry courses and learning to work with Hebrew and Hubmaier."

*Rafael Velazco* . . . will serve the Marseilles (Ohio) United Methodist Church. In ministry he wants the congregation "to experience our (my wife, son and myself) presence as voluntary and focused on them. From this much can develop." He was hospitalized during his first year. "Several students and C. J. Dyck stopped to visit me. I had never before been as depressed, lonely and frustrated. Those who came helped me to bounce back. From that experience I feel that my own presence with and among others during the various phases of their lives will be of much importance."

*John David Wiebe's* . . . assignment is not yet certain. "The summer Supervised Experience in Ministry in pastoral ministry in Hopedale, Ill., the Jerusalem Study Semester and a Clinical Pastoral Education experience are highlights in three years of growth toward wholeness as a ministering person."

**Master of Arts in Peace Studies**

*Jan Lugibihl* . . . will serve with Mennonite Central Committee in the Philippines. The assignment includes being "a listening presence among Filipino women working as 'hospitality girls' around the U.S. Subic Bay Naval Base in Olongapo. I have been changed by being with a community which takes seriously God's message of liberation. Being with women and men among the faculty and students who encouraged me on my search for faithfulness has been an evidence of God's grace working in my life."

**Certificate in Theological Studies**

*Darrell Heidebrecht* . . . is a member of the Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, with Gladys, his wife, working in a summer assignment with Native Ministries at Matheson Island, Man.

# Compassion: mending the broken community

## Commencement address excerpts

*Hubert L. Brown*

In Job 16:4 we read, "I also could speak as ye do, if your soul were in my soul's stead." ("I also could speak like you, if you were in my place" NIV.)

The book of Job is in the main a conversation among Job and three neighbors. They professedly sought to help him. They were not pharisaical or insincere. They really meant to help Job. The would-be helpers, however, relied on modes of helping that were thoroughly conventional. They had a problem in trying to help this man in trouble. They had never known any trouble themselves.

The whole long first part of the book of Job resembles a type of conversation in which we have often found ourselves involved. It is not that we are talking at cross-purposes with someone else but that we are talking to no purpose. Our minds never really meet, because we have no common ground of experience on which to stand.

Thus, in the words of the text, Job put his finger on the real difficulty in such a situation, "I also could speak as ye do, if your soul were in my soul's stead." In other words, if you could put yourself in my place, and I could put myself in your place, we might understand each other and help each other out.

We are living today in a broken world filled with trouble and pain. We are plagued with many problems. People face problems; problems face people. Practically every problem situation in this country and in the world has to do with individuals. We must never view the problems of hunger, cold, lack of shelter, unemployment, racism, injustice and war in some abstract manner. These problems are intensely personal. Mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers are affected by them.

The U.S. Employment Service, which is supposed to assist people in finding jobs, has been forced to close its doors in many states due to budget cuts; 3 million children who received hot lunches two years ago have had their program curtailed; a million unemployed workers have had their food stamps eliminated, the elderly poor are now made to pay more and more of their own money for medical care; the legal services program, which services the poorest strata of the population, is being gutted as more than 300 offices have been closed and its staff curtailed by one-third.

Millions of poor children face a bleak future condemned to lives of desperation. Many people are being driven to the margins of despair by the most hostile administration in 50 years. The Reagan policies of rampant militarism, massive military spending on the backs of the poor at the expense of vital social entitlement programs is without parallel in American history.

People look to Washington for compassion and fair play and for protection of their civil rights. Instead, they get Pac Man social policies and caveman civil rights policies. Like Job of old, people are in trouble. People are suffering. They are crying out, "If only you could put yourself in my place, and I could put myself in your place, we might understand each other and receive help."

We are living in a time where folk find it difficult to identify with others, particularly those who are hurting.

There needs to be a recovery of compassion. The word compassion means "to suffer with." Compassion means going where it hurts . . . to enter into places of pain . . . to share in brokenness, fears, confusion and anguish.

Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears.

Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the human condition.

Compassion must not be confused with pity. Pity connotes condescension. Pity says in effect, "I feel sorry for you because you are different." Pity regards its object as not only suffering but weak and inferior. Compassion works from a strength born of an awareness of shared weakness, and not from someone else's weakness. Compassion says, "Nobody is better or less than anybody else."

So too is compassion a letting go of one's problems, one's difficulties, in order to remember the common base that makes another's suffering mine. Compassion is about feelings of togetherness. It means I really identify with you. I sit where you sit.

I recall the story of Ezekiel who identified with the children of Israel in their captivity. The writer in Ezekiel 3:15-16 says, "And it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came unto me. Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, and I sat where they sat, and I remained astonished among them seven days."

I sat where they sat. Just think how they reacted—these people in captivity in Babylon. Here was one of their religious leaders, the official representative of the Most High God, and he had come to them in their pain and suffering. He sat among them, understanding their grief, in solidarity with their agony.

Compassion must not be confused with tearful pity and sentimentalism. Compassion involves the relieving of the pain of others, not merely crying about it. Sentimentalism tears and pity destroys compassion and blocks the possibility of healing.

The Bible speaks of works of mercy, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the poor, breaking the unjust fetters, liberating the captives, comforting the sick and visiting the prisoner. Compassion leads to works.

America is so caught up in the idolatry of national security that we are rendered powerless when it comes to being compassionate in the global village. Something has gone wrong on the inside. Our attitudes and works carry us away from healing and salvation. We're lost trying to save ourselves. Even in the church compassion is missing. It has gone away. It has run off to a conference somewhere.

Jesus, our Lord and role model for living, insists that our compassion be linked to hands stretched out in helping others. For Jesus, compassion invokes activity. It invokes work.

I'm concerned about our Humpty Dumpty world, a world of brokenness. This year is a crucial one with the presidential election. The 1984 elections are the most critical elections held in this country since the presidential elections of 1860, before the Emancipation Proclamation.

The road to peace, justice and compassion for the nation as well as the world rests in the kind of mobilization and political renaissance as represented by Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. Jackson is not so much running for president as he is leading a movement for social reform in our nation. I'm behind him 100 percent. I wish some Republican Mennonites would join me.

I speak to you because I believe that we can change some things—with compassion. Compassion alone can save us and our planet. If compassion can be recovered, if we just give compassion a place in our daily concerns, our world will be healed. We will accomplish what Job's neighbors did not.

*Hubert L. Brown is pastor of Calvary Mennonite Church, Inglewood, Calif., and moderator of Southwest Mennonite Conference (MC).*

**The man who gave the world** the Heimlich Maneuver, which has already saved more than 6,000 people from choking to death, believes he has figured out a formula for world peace. Henry Heimlich, a professor at Xavier University, Cincinnati, wants to use computers to project worldwide economic needs and then fill each country's need by free-flowing trade. "Interdependence of trade, that's the solution to war," said Heimlich, adding, "Each country says to the other, 'I will help you, for my benefit.' "

**Phanat Nikhom Camp in Thailand** receives refugees from the Lao, Khmer and Vietnamese camps which are under the care of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Here the refugees are prepared for resettlement. Fred and Shirley Redekop work under Mennonite Central Committee in providing orientation for Canadian bound refugees through lectures, films, written materials and question-and-answer sessions. The Redekops see the 135,000 Indochinese refugees in Thailand as a symptom of a larger problem. "The problems are in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, but as North Americans we bear some of the responsibility."

**On the 50th anniversary** of the Barmen Declaration, which began the Confessing Church in Germany, the Lutheran Peace Fellowship has issued a strong call to tax resistance by American Christians. LPF calls its action "a witness of faith against the false lordship of nuclear weapons and other instruments of mass destruction."

# Minority youth learn marketable skills

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Noel Santiago of New Holland, Pa., just completed a 21-month assignment with IMPACT, an alternative career program for minority youth started by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. in 1982.

Through IMPACT (Inter-Mennonite Program for Alternative Careers Training) MCC U.S. and urban and rural church communities cooperate to provide minority youth with the opportunities they need to develop vocational skills and receive job training.

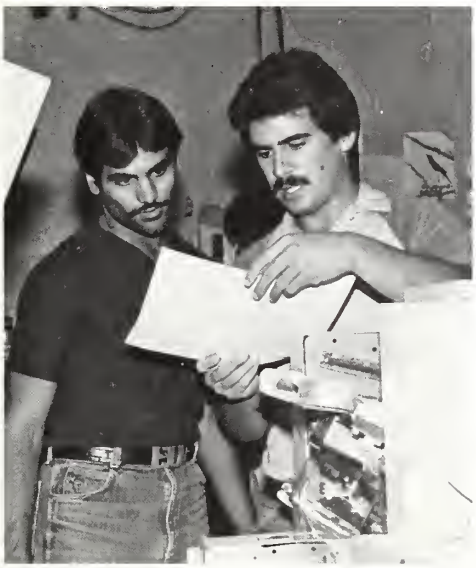
Santiago worked for almost two years as a printer at MCC headquarters in Akron. He learned to operate MCC's two presses and copy camera. MCC provided on-the-job training and enabled him to attend a vocational-technical school two nights a week to learn printing techniques.

Santiago feels positive about his experience with IMPACT. "I've developed a marketable skill through this program. When I first came to MCC I had no experience with printing, but now I could go anywhere and apply these skills," he said.

He also realizes how much he has grown personally through this experience. "I am so impressed with how much I feel a part of MCC. Once you work here, it becomes a part of you," said Santiago. He appreciated the chapels that are held two times a week during office hours. He comments, "I was really challenged by the chapel services and gained many new insights."

He married Juanita Rolon on July 21, two days after completing his work at MCC. They plan to attend Goshen (Ind.) College in the fall, where he will study Hispanic ministries and Juanita will study psychology. He is a member of New Holland (Pa.) Hispanic Mennonite Church.

When asked his overall impressions of the IMPACT program, Santiago said, "It's a great program. It offers minority youth an alternative to the military."



*Noel Santiago (right) trains Eddie Rodriguez on the press in MCC's production room.*

Eddie Rodriguez from Brooklyn, N.Y., has replaced Santiago in a one-year IMPACT assignment at MCC headquarters. He is excited about this opportunity and says, "I know that I need to develop a skill in order to get a good job, and I also need an education." MCC is sponsoring Rodriguez to attend night school to get his general equivalency diploma.

Rodriguez has looked for a job for a long time. He went to Puerto Rico hoping to find work there. When he heard about opportunities available through IMPACT, "I visited MCC headquarters and liked what I saw," said Rodriguez. He will live with relatives in Akron during the time of his IMPACT experience. Rodriguez is a member of First Mennonite Church in Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Linda S. Sauder*

## FJC to begin unique training program

Freeman, S.D. (FJC)—Freeman Junior College will begin a new program in heavy construction equipment operation in September. A building to house this program and the existing farm and ranch management program has been approved for construction this fall.

The heavy construction equipment operation curriculum will include practical experience training on equipment, including road graders, loaders, backhoes, scrapers and trenchers. Also planned is a transit concrete program. The program is unique in that no other school in the state offers such training.

In developing and researching the program the need for such training has received strong support from many contractors and equipment dealers across a three-state area.

Dallas Obenauer, who will head the program, has 18 years of experience in the heavy construction industry.

One attractive feature of the program, as envisioned and developed by Obenauer, is that it allows practical experience training for students without a major investment in equipment by the college. Obenauer has secured agreements with equipment dealers who will allow use of equipment by FJC in exchange for maintenance—minor repairs, cleaning, painting, etc.—of that equipment for eventual resale by the firms.

In addition, contractors have indicated strong interest in providing summer employment for students taking the course as well as strong consideration to those students for employment once their vocational training is complete. Already agreements with contractors have been received. Those agreements should make the program attractive to students either looking to gain full-time employment or those relying on summer construction jobs as they continue their education.

**The first annual Chicago Mennonite Festival** and Sale date has been changed from Sept. 8 to July 1985. The exact date and location will be announced later. While craft and food entries will be welcomed, the main attractions remain art objects and handmade quilts. All sale proceeds will go for Mennonite mission work in Chicago. Anyone wanting to contribute quilts or artwork should notify Nancy Myers, 814 S. Wesley, Oak Park, IL 60304.

**Conventional irrigation development in Nepal** allocates water so that those who have the most land—and are already wealthy by local standards—get the most benefits, and those who have the least land get very little. But the Andhi Khola Project is a new concept whereby water shares are divided equally among all participants, even those with little or no land. According to Ernie Thiessen, a Mennonite Central Committee worker with the project, everyone who participates in building the system will be allowed to earn up to their share of water shares.

**"Networking"** may be a key word for pastoral counselors trying to help victims of drug and alcohol abuse, says David A. Works, president of the interfaith North Conway Institute in Boston. The nation's clergy report that 60 percent of the pastoral problems they deal with involve abuse of alcohol or drugs, the institute said. Works, an Episcopal priest, said that "the time is right for religious and community leaders to help formulate public opinion and innovative, caring programs on the use, nonuse and abuse of alcohol and drugs." The religious community is "uniquely equipped and strategically placed for developing new attitudes in society."

# Cooperative work with refugees evolves in Honduras

San Marcos, Honduras (MCC)—"This experience of working with the refugees has been a first for us in Honduras," comments Luis Flores, coordinator for the Mennonite refugee program in the Salvadoran refugee camps in southwestern Honduras. Flores says the work has positively affected the entire Mennonite church even though only a few congregations are actively involved.

The Honduran Mennonite Church began its involvement with the Salvadoran refugees in 1980 when refugees started crossing into the border area of Honduras where several congregations are located. At that time Flores, who is a member of the San Marcos Mennonite Church, worked as a social worker for CEDEN, an interdenominational Honduran relief and development organization.

Because of his involvement in refugee work the Mennonite church began its first work with the refugees. The church assisted CEDEN in a census of the first refugees and in distributing material aid.

As the number of refugees increased and other international organizations became aware of the needs, some agencies were duplicating responses. According to Flores, at times Caritas, World Vision and CEDEN were all responding to the same group of people. The situation called for overall coordination.

Today the government of Honduras and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) coordinate the work of a number of national and international organizations in the camps. For the past two years the Mennonite church has had a contract with the UNHCR for technical matters in the camps, including housing, water, communication and agriculture. Mennonite Central Committee provides personnel to work alongside Honduran Mennonites in these projects.

*Salvadoran refugees wash clothes at Mesa Grande Camp in Honduras.*

The relationship between MCC and the local Mennonite church has been good. Linda Shelly, current MCC country representative in Honduras, gives a lot of credit to the nine-hour bus rides that she and Flores often need to make together between the Mesa Grande camps and the camps near Colomoncagua. These trips provide opportunities for in-depth discussions which are crucial for MCC-Mennonite church coordination, says Shelly.

The Mennonites have worked with the over 17,000 refugees to create a home in the camps. There continue to be threats that the refugees may be uprooted from these homes for political and military purposes and against their will and best interests. Because of the Mennonites' relationships with the Salvadorans, they gain a new understanding of what it means to be a refugee.

As the only Protestant church working directly with the refugees, Mennonites have received attention from the wider Christian community in Honduras as well as from the government. But the work has been costly and not always understood. David Artico, an elder in his congregation and agricultural worker in Mesa Grande, says that other Christians have criticized the Mennonites for being involved with the refugees. Many say that the refugees are dangerous and bad people. "But," Artica asks, "if Christ is with us, why should we be afraid?"

Much of the fear of the refugees comes from misinformation, according to Flores. "What the people say is the same as what the press says or what the authorities say. It's not what they've seen or proved."

Flores works to counter this fear by inviting people to visit the refugee camps and to talk with the refugees. Shelly, originally from Newton, Kan., and Lucas Bonilla, coordinator of social services for the Mennonite churches in the border area, are visiting Mennonite churches in other parts of the country and showing a slide presentation so that the churches can have a better idea of the refugee work. Shelly finds that

**"The Ribbon,"** which will be tied around the Pentagon in August 1985, marking the 40th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is being constructed by individuals, families and church groups. Each yard-long muslin piece of the ribbon conveys a design or message. The Peace Museum of Chicago will coordinate the final sewing of the ribbon before it is sent to Arlington, Va. The museum will also be the repository for The Ribbon after it is tied around the Pentagon.

**Elizabeth McAlister** of Baltimore, a former nun and now a peace activist, hugs her 3-year-old daughter, Katie, prior to entering federal court in Syracuse, N.Y., for sentencing on charges related to a trespass at the Griffiss Air Base in Rome, N.Y., where McAlister and others staged peace protests. The former Catholic nun received a three-year term in federal prison.

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many Honduran Mennonites also have a negative view of the refugees because they have heard more from the news media than from their own church about the situation.

MCC has only two North American workers in the refugee camps due to an overall reduction in the Mennonite role. This reduction is partially the result of disagreements between the Mennonite church and the UNHCR over relocation. Although the position of the church has cost several MCC placements, MCC fully supports the Mennonite church in its decision to support what is best for the refugees. Most of the Honduran Mennonite workers in the camps have been able to secure jobs under the sponsorship of other organizations that continue work with the refugees.

The proposed refugee relocation leaves the future of MCC-Honduran Mennonite cooperation in the refugee camps uncertain. But a new call for MCC involvement recently came from Mennonites in another part of the country who want to expand their social ministry to the poor living around them. MCC workers hope the relationship between the Honduran Mennonites and MCC will remain healthy and growing, combining local church vision with North American resources in order to serve those in need in the name of Christ. *Joetta Handrich Schlabach, MCC Nicaragua*

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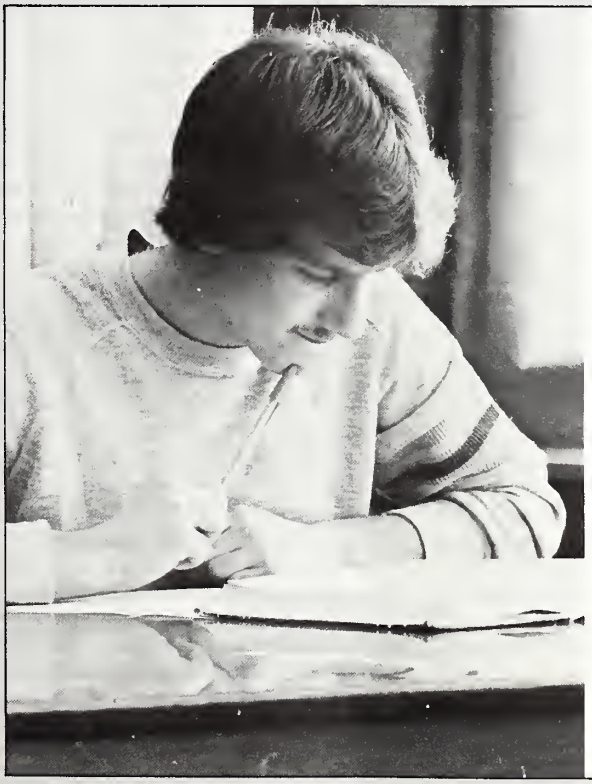
***Mennonite Biblical Seminary*** ***Columbia Bible Institute*** ***Bluffton College***

***Freeman Junior College*** ***Conrad Grebel College*** ***Elim Bible Institute*** ***Bethel College***



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***Back-to-School Sunday, August 26, 1984***

***Canadian Mennonite Bible College*** ***Swift Current Bible Institute***

**"Cantemos Louvores"** ("Let Us Sing Praises") is the title of a new hymnal and chorus book in Portuguese compiled by Eleanor Peters Loewen (left), Commission on Overseas Mission missionary in Brazil. Ellie and her husband, David Gary, are involved in church planting there and work in partnership with the Brazilian Mennonite Evangelical Association. "The object of this project was to offer to the Mennonite churches of Brazil one book which would be both unifying for a scattered group (26 congregations in five geographical regions) and a practical incentive to use a more varied repetoire in worship and praise," Loewen said.

**A federal appeals** court ruled this spring that Haitian refugees seeking asylum in the United States have no constitutional rights and can be shipped back or held in prison camps without due process. The Immigration and Naturalization Service hailed the decision as "a clear victory for the administration's policies." Because Cuban refugees are generally granted asylum and Haitian refugees are not, the INS has frequently been accused of racial prejudice.

# RECORD

## MINISTERS

*Verlin Koehn*, Grace Church, Enid, Okla, was ordained July 22 to serve as a missionary with Youth for Christ International.

*Theodore J. Regier, Jr.*, pastor at West Swamp Church, Quakertown, Pa., will become pastor at Warden (Wash.) Church on Sept. 30.

*Wilfred Ulrich*, co-pastor at Grace Church, Enid, Okla., has been appointed executive director of the Northwest Oklahoma Pastoral Care Association, a part-time position. He will continue as co-pastor.

## WORKERS

*Arthur Driedger* has resigned as associate director of MCC Canada Overseas Services, effective in November.

*William Dunn* has been appointed executive vice president, corporate division for BroMenn HealthCare, effective July 1.

*Paul* and *Suzanne Ford*, St. Louis Fellowship, will begin a five-year assignment with Mennonite Central Committee in January 1985 in Nigeria, where they will serve as country representatives. They previously served with MCC in Sudan from 1980-83. Paul taught at an engineering college; Suzanne worked with mentally handicapped children. They have been studying the past year at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. Paul is the son of C. Hubbard and Mary Ford of Parma, Ohio, and Suzanne is the daughter of Royce and Doris Engle of Spencerville, Ohio.

*Kathy Giesbrecht*, Burrows Bethel Church, Winnipeg, began an eight-week Commission on Overseas Mission assignment in June teaching English conversation and working in youth ministry in relation to the Mennonite mission program in Hong Kong.

*Orlando J.* and *Violet Goering*, First United Methodist Church, Vermillion, S.D., and Salem Church, Freeman, S.D., have begun a three-year assignment under the Commission on Overseas Mission as directors of the World Friendship Center in Hiroshima, Japan. They left July 29 for language study. They will host visitors, conduct peace studies, teach English, direct exchange programs and visit atomic bomb victims in the Atomic Bomb Hospital and Retirement Home. Orlando had been professor of sociology at the University of South Dakota since 1971. Violet had taught keyboard and given English instruction to refugees.

*Vic* and *Adeline Rempel*, First Church, Calgary, have begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with MCC in Whitesburg, Ky., where they will be serving in home repair and as secretary, respectively. Their parents are John and Katie Rempel and Cornelius and Erna Hildebrandt, all of Calgary.

*George* and *Anne Sawatzky*, First United Methodist Church, Vancouver, and Eben-Ezer Church, Clearbrook, B.C., respectively, have begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with MCC as group home parents at Port Hardy, B.C. Their parents are Gerhard and Elfriede Sawatzky of Vancouver and Henry and Annie Giesbrecht of Abbotsford, B.C.

*Goerings*

*Sawatzkys*

*Rempels*


### Leading pastor needed

Leading pastor required for **Emanuel Mennonite Church.** Membership 120.

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# Politics and tears: reflections on a convention

*Phil Harrington*

Like many San Francisco residents I had planned to escape during the Democratic National Convention. It's not that I don't like crowds and excitement. Rather, I remain skeptical about political means to social change. Recent U.S. presidential elections have not done much to convince me otherwise.

Yet I didn't escape. Instead I immersed myself. I pored over more newspapers in one morning than I usually read in a week, prayed and shouted at peace rallies, talked with demonstrators and delegates on the street, then ran home to see how television was interpreting it all to the rest of the world. Maybe I've succumbed to the glamor of politics, but I doubt it. Something tells me the stakes of the political game are too high to step aside this time around. This seemed the consensus among the thousands who crammed into Grace Cathedral on the eve of the convention to hear impassioned pleas from bishops, rabbis and lay leaders. As we carried candles to the convention site for a prayer service, we also carried a confirmed conviction: Today's political issues, particularly nuclear arms, Central America, the plight of the poor, are religious issues.

And as I look at the stack of newspapers still on my floor and the pages of personal notes and observations on top of that, it is one religious occurence at the convention itself that has made the strongest impression on me. I was not surprised to see constant repetition from the podium which turned even statements of some truth into simple slogans. I was not surprised that the media clamored to cover brief incidents of violent demonstration and then pretty much ignored 20,000 people of great variety shouting and singing for peace, many of us for four hours straight. Nor was I surprised to hear the police get credit for the lack of incident at that rally. I was not surprised to see Democrats proclaim themselves the party of the poor while dressing and behaving like the party of the party-goers. And while disappointed, I was not too surprised that a major party platform will always be more timid than biblical mandates. What did surprise me was to see delegates cry at a political convention. Crying is a religious act.

They were not crying for joy after a candidate's victory. They were responding to a moving speech by Jesse Jackson, the candidate with the fewest supporters present. They cried because this preacher had helped them to feel some passion for the world's problems and what they may be able to do about them. And aside from what anybody may think about Jesse Jackson and the content of his speech (or was it a sermon?), I wonder whether the time has not come to do some serious crying about current events. Have we lost our passion for justice? No amount of slogans, speeches or rationalizing our way to solutions will substitute.

*Jesse Jackson: ". . . this preacher had helped them to feel some passion for the world's problems and what they may be able to do about them."*

When Jesus overlooked Jerusalem and saw its forthcoming doom he broke down and wept: "Would that you knew even today the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42). When was the last time you picked up a newspaper and wept over what you read? We know the facts about a lot of problems. Sometimes we need to feel a problem in our guts before we do anything about it.

I don't know if the Democrats cried long and hard enough. At any rate they have left, and San Francisco is back to normal (inasmuch as that word can ever apply to this city). But things have just begun. Dallas now prepares for the Republican version of a convention, and in Canada the party leaders have started their debates for the general election in September.

Whether we like it or not, we are in for quite a political season. As Mennonites we must ask not only if we have anything to say or how to say it, but also where does it come from? How deep is our concern?

*Phil Harrington, 424 Guerrero, San Francisco, CA 94110, is a member of the First Mennonite Church of San Francisco.*

All traditions, new and old, have a point of origin somewhere in history. We don't know how or where many old traditions began. But new traditions spring up every day, wherever people gather . . . in families or churches, in groups of two or two thousand . . . to celebrate some part of their lives together.

Mutual Aid Sunday is a new tradition; thus, we can trace its origin. Two years ago, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ first set aside a special day to celebrate congregational caring and mutual aid. Yet it is an old tradition, too. Mutual aid has been part of our church life since the days of the 16th-century Anabaptists . . . and even earlier, since the days of the first Christians.

Today, congregations show their commitment to caring in many ways: material aid for those having less . . . support for the sick and the lonely . . . loving attention to members' everyday needs. **Mutual Aid Sunday reminds congregations of this commitment to caring.** Through songs, readings, sermons, a fellowship meal, and stories of your mutual aid experiences, your congregation can recall old traditions . . . and create new ones. With your church, take this occasion to reaffirm caring and sharing as central to life in Christ.

# COMMITTED TO CARING
# MUTUAL AID SUNDAY 1984

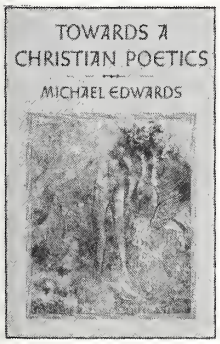
Goshen, IN 46526
Mennonite Mutual Aid

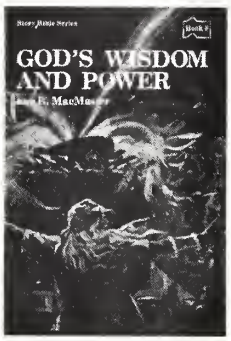
# RESOURCES

**In Search of Refuge** (Herald Press, 1984) by Yvonne Dilling with Ingrid Rogers is the journal of a North American volunteer who spent 18 months with Salvadoran refugees on the border between El Salvador and Honduras. In addition to Dilling's journal entries, the book includes an introduction by Jim Wallis, 24 pages of photos by British photojournalist Mike Goldwater, an essay of historical background on Central America by Catholic reporter Gary MacEoin and a March 1984 epilogue by Dilling on her return visit to Honduras. *In Search of Refuge* is available in quality paperback for $9.95 ($11.95 in Canada).

Focusing on both the personal and the collective aspects of the organization, **The Alcoholics Anonymous Experience** (McGraw-Hill, 1984) by Milton A. Maxwell features accounts by AA members of their experiences with AA groups. It is available in paperback for $9.95.

**Sensing the Enemy** (Dial, 1984) by Lady Borton is the account of an American woman among the boat people of




Vietnam. It is available in hardback for $14.95.

If language was involved in the Fall and in Pentecost, says author Michael Edwards in **Towards a Christian Poetics** (Eerdmans, 1984), it is reasonable to explore literature, where the possibilities of language are most intense, as a contention with a fallen world and an attempt, through the renewal of language, to recreate that world. The hardback is available for $13.95.

**Discover Your Conflict Management Style** (Alban Institute, 1984) by Speed B. Leas has two objectives: (1) to help individuals become aware of the range of appropriate conflict strategies available to them and when it is fitting to use each, and (2) to help individuals become aware of their preferred styles and reflect on other possible styles. It is available in paperback for $4.25.

"We are here on earth to become like Christ," says author Stephen Winward in **Fruit of the Spirit** (Eerdmans, 1984). He sees fruits of the Spirit as virtues of Christ to be imitated. The paperback is $4.95.

**"The Killer Storm of 1982: One Christian Response,"** a 16-minute slide set written by Egon Hofer of Dinuba, Calif., is available without charge from Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, or from MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8.

A new map, more accurate than the Mercator projection, is available. It is the work of Arno Peters, a West German historian. The **Peters map** is available for $6.95 from Church World Service, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.

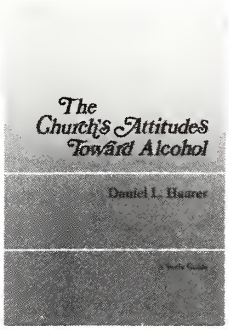
**God's Wisdom and Power**, book 5 of Eve MacMaster's projected 10-volume Herald Press Story Bible Series, tells about the glorious reign of Solomon, the wonderful works of Elijah and Elisha, and the Proverbs and Song of Songs. It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.45 in Canada).

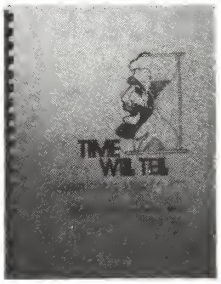
Faith and Life Press, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, has released two new publications: **Time Will Tell**, a musical drama based on Acts, by James Juhnke and J. Harold Moyer, which sells for $4.95, and **The Church's Attitudes Toward Alcohol**, a study guide concerned with the impact of alcohol abuse on individuals, families, society and the church, by Daniel L. Haarer, which sells for $3.95 (A resource packet is also available for $4.95).

**The World of Amish Quilts** (Good Books, 1984), in 128 pages and 249 color plates, offers readers an in-depth look at the world of antique Amish quilts. The quality paperback original by Rachel Thomas Pellman and Kenneth R. Pellman is available for $15.95.

**From Amish and Mennonite Kitchens** (Good Books, 1984) by Phyllis Pellman Good and Rachel Thomas Pellman contains hundreds of recipes under 12 sections: Breads; Soups; Salads; Vegetables; Meats; Casseroles; Pies; Cakes; Cookies; Desserts; Jams, Jellies and Relishes; Candies, Beverages and Snacks. The text of the square-format book is done entirely in calligraphy by Gayle Sollenberger Smoker. It is available in quality paperback for $11.95.

The Canadian Mennonite Radio and Television Council is offering free information about shaping television and ra-




dio programming in **"Talking Back,"** a six-page booklet which encourages viewers and listeners to talk back to TV and radio stations. The booklet and other pamphlets are available upon request from MRTC, Box 2, Station F., Winnipeg, MB R2L 2A5.

"Persons who have not learned to die will die anyway, but their last hours will be extremely difficult for them and their loved ones," writes Samuel Gerber in his book **Learning to Die** (Herald Press, 1984). It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.45 in Canada).

**Helping Children Cope with Death** (Herald Press, 1984) by Robert V. Dodd is written "to assist the reader in helping children deal with their thoughts and feelings concerning the death of a friend or relative, or in facing their own death from a terminal disease." Cost is $1.95 ($2.45 in Canada).

Richard Longnecker looks at what role the New Testament should play in the formation and expression of Christian social morality today in **New Testament Social Ethics for Today** (Eerdmans, 1984). The paperback is available for $5.95.

**The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament** (Eerdmans, 1984) by Allen Verhey examines the ethic of Jesus, the moral tradition of the early church and in subsequent eras, surveys proposals for the use of Scripture, then offers his own. The paperback costs $13.95.

First published in the early 1900s, **Mary Slessor of Calabar** (Zondervan, 1984) by W. P. Livingstone is the biography of a missionary to Africa who died in 1915. A part of Zondervan's Clarion Classics series, the paperback sells for $7.95.

**In the Land of the Living** (Zondervan, 1984) by Karin Granberg-Michaelson uses specific examples to describe how a wholistic health treatment plan operates and how to become involved in health-related ministries. The paperback is available for $4.95.

# A church for the campus

*Keith G. Schrag*

Ames (Iowa) Mennonite Fellowship is in the eighth year of a growing, changing ministry to new and returning students—Mennonites and others. Before new Mennonite students arrive on campus we call them at their homes. At that time we welcome them in advance, briefly indicate services we offer and ask if we can be of assistance before they arrive. We inform them of a get-acquainted picnic the fellowship holds the first Sunday afternoon after fall classes begin and tell them we will call to remind them after they arrive. We encourage them to register their campus address and phone number with us.

Usually we receive addresses for registered students from several sources—the printout from the Iowa State University admissions office available confidentially to the Campus Ministries Association, notification from home pastors or congregations, reports from students already attending ISU and happenstance meetings of parents and other friends.

Some students find AMF an attractive option, others are not interested. There are those people who choose not to go to church anywhere or who live close enough to their homes to return home most weekends. There is another group which chooses to shop around, visit the many variations available and become active in one of them, whether a traditional or conservative larger congregation, a mainline Protestant church or the progressive Catholic congregation we work with closely. At least a third of the enrolled Mennonite students find AMF to be home for them while here. They find the weekly Bible study and sharing time a source of personal support and spiritual growth. They are part of the morning worship on Sunday. They readily take responsibility for decision making, worship leadership, peace and justice ministries and social events. The experience of deep involvement with a small fellowship helps them realize more of what is involved in running a congregation and gives them opportunities to develop leadership qualities.

Some students we see only occasionally—at monthly socials, at MCC representative visits (twice annually) or in passing at campus events or as people who drop by the office. Our socials are becoming traditional bashes—Halloween party, Thanksgiving feast, Christmas goodies sharing, January taffy pull, Easter breakfast, May pastor's birthday party and homemade ice cream fantasia.

*As students again enter the halls of learning, the support of their home congregations is vital as they seek insights for Christian living in today's world.*

*This sculpture was done by Gerald Loewen and stands on the Canadian Mennonite Bible College campus in Winnipeg.*

Mennonites are well-received and regarded in the Ames /ISU community. We are an option that no one else offers—a cross between warm evangelical faith and a strong peace and social justice ministry. Numerous people from other backgrounds have become our members because they wanted to grow spiritually and to merge an interest in working for peace with a warm personal and group piety. We have been blessed richly by those who have brought varied denominational backgrounds and shared the faith sojourn with us.

Because of my pastoral skills and interest in counseling and therapy, we have provided personal counseling with students and others. We have also held some personal growth workshops in spirituality and prayer, silence, sexuality, intimacy and building relationships. Numerous social concerns (draft and military counseling, war tax witnessing, peace concerns in troubled spots in the world) have been our focus at times, as well as support for gay and lesbian people. We have been moved over and over to pray, search the Scriptures, confer together and risk our secure ready-made answers as we have been confronted by people with deep pains who ask profound questions about their lives, faith and discipleship.

These mutual searches often have taken us beyond the traditional answers. That becomes frightening to some younger students who want a more secure place while adjusting to the fearsome, large state university environment. We pray for them and try to support them in personal ways. Others wish for the support of co-pilgrims on the journey for Christian fullness. They find warm support with us. We rejoice that we can walk together with them as they explore their identity and faith concerns and as they grow in commitment to Christ and in service to humankind.

*Keith G. Schrag is the minister of the Ames Mennonite Fellowship, 118 Hayward, Ames IA 50010. They minister to and are located near the heart of the large Iowa State University.*

# Added mission in Colombia

*George Ediger*

"I like your religion," Antonia Rodriguez told me as we visited together, standing on the newly cleared cement slab where her home had stood before the March 31 earthquake. She and her husband, Geraldo, had helped a group of Mennonite volunteers clear away the rubble and clean and stack salvaged bricks for the reconstruction of their home, even though both are aged and physically handicapped.

The earthquake that destroyed the Rodriguez home had also devastated a calculated 60 percent of the ancient city of Popayán nestled in the Andean mountains of southwestern Colombia. During Holy Week in Colombia many thousands of pilgrims visit this traditionally Catholic city to attend services at one of their many churches. It was on Easter Thursday morning when many were already attending mass that the walls began to shake and roofs fell in. Many of the over 350 casualties perished in the churches.

Almost immediately help was given to the stricken community from all parts of the world. MENCOLDES, the Colombian branch of Mennonite Central Committee, sent out a call for volunteers from the various Mennonite churches in this country. Four weeks after the disaster the first 13 volunteers went to Popayán to help in the cleanup. Three more groups followed the first group. I had the privilege of participating in the first two-week project along with missionary Gerald Stucky and his son Peter.

Nelson Webber was sent from the United States by MCC to help organize the Mennonite Disaster Service, a first for the Colombian churches. Oscar Rubiano of MENCOLDES was the Colombian director of the program. Besides the missionaries, five women and five men from local Mennonite churches participated in the first group.

An area of the city was selected where little help had been given. Families to be helped were chosen on the basis of need, preference being given to homes where there was no male head of the household or where the couple was of advanced age. We helped those whom we felt were least able to help themselves. Cleanup work was done on 14 houses. A simple structure was built for a woman whose house was destroyed by fire. Material from one house was salvaged to help an even more destitute family. Besides helping single mothers and older people, the volunteer workers lent assistance to one younger couple whose bakery and only means of livelihood had been destroyed by the quake.

*Disasters know no boundaries. Sometimes the act of working together is a first natural step to sharing our faith across boundaries and barriers that earlier kept us apart.*

The project produced fourfold benefits. The 14 families that received our direct help were personally blessed by our witness of Christ's love for them. Many others of the community, observing our selfless service in Jesus' name, responded with friendly waves and commentaries as we went down the streets.

Secondly, the entire evangelical community of Popayán was favorably impressed by our kind of witness and service. Most had never heard of the Mennonites before. At one meeting of the evangelical coordinating council for the reconstruction of Popayán, when discussing the proper strategy for an evangelical witness, one minister stood up and commented, "What Popayán needs just now is not evangelistic campaigns but what the Mennonites are doing." Another evening I listened for an hour as one Christian shared with his pastor all he knew about the Mennonites. Humbled, I questioned myself if I had ever shared such a heartfelt testimony with others.

Of equal importance perhaps were the personal benefits received by each of the participants in the voluntary service program. Each evening after supper we gathered to share our experiences and blessings of the day. It was impressive to listen to the many testimonies. Later the proof of the blessings was revealed as the participants shared their experiences with their home churches. Their enthusiasm was contagious. Many more volunteered to participate in the ongoing program. I was impressed by the excellent spirit of dedication, cooperation and sacrifice that was manifested in the group. It was an experience none of us will forget.

This project of voluntary service was the first of its kind among the Colombian Mennonite churches. It has brought an important new dimension to our witness to the love of Christ in this country.

*George Ediger wrote this report while still in Colombia with the Commission on Overseas Mission. The Edigers currently reside at Box 6, Inman, KS 67546.*

# Mennonite studies five years later

*Harry Loewen*

*Activities carried out under the jurisdiction of the University of Winnipeg's Chair in Mennonite Studies were recently reported by the Chair's first incumbent, Harry Loewen, and evaluated by a committee. The Chair was reported to be "off to a fine start." The committee indicated that "Dr. Loewen is doing an outstanding job in conducting a program that is finding favor both with students as well as with the Mennonite community as a whole."*

*Portions of Loewen's report are reprinted here for our readers.*

*The Chair of Mennonite Studies helps students gain a better understanding of themselves and of their heritage.*

The Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, the only one of its kind in North America, was established in 1978 to give students an opportunity to study the cultural, religious and literary heritage of the Anabaptist/Mennonites within the context of an academic program. It was made possible through the gifts of David Friesen, Queen's Counsel, his family and the government of Canada.

Since the Chair is an academic program like any other at the university, its function includes teaching, research scholarship and community service.

**Teaching**. My first activity upon assuming the Chair was to devise courses and plan a program of study in the areas of Mennonite history, culture and literature. A slate of eight courses was established within the first two years. These included Mennonite Studies 1 and 2, Mennonite Authors, Mennonite Image in Literature and others. I am responsible for coordinating the university's study-abroad program at the University of Mannheim, Germany. While attending Mannheim, participating students refine their German language and study the Reformation period in which the Anabaptist/Mennonites originated. Students also visit archival and cultural centers in connection with their academic studies.

**Research and scholarship.** Mennonite studies is a relatively new discipline, not so much in historiography and theology as in literary and cultural studies. Moreover, Mennonites have only recently begun to write novels and poetry, and literary scholarship among Mennonites is in its beginning stages. Even in historiography there are many gaps which need to be researched and documented. In the last decade or so there has been a renaissance in students' desire to study the cultural aspects of the Mennonites in formal academic settings and in general interest for the tradition and values of the Mennonite people. All this calls for source material, basic research and analytical writing.

My scholarly activity since coming to the University of Winnipeg includes the following items: I have delivered 18 invited academic and professional papers, published (or accepted for publication) 10 articles and several book reviews, edited a book (*Mennonite Images: Historical, Cultural and Literary Essays Dealing with Mennonite Issues*) and established with the assistance of colleagues and Mennonite institutions a scholarly journal (*Journal of Mennonite Studies*).

In addition to academic research activity, I have published numerous popular and semipopular articles, reviews and poems in English and German periodicals and papers. I am also associated (as book review editor) with the *Mennonite Mirror*, a monthly Mennonite magazine which specializes in Russian-Mennonite history, culture and life. An annual guest lecture series sponsored by the Chair in Mennonite Studies is an integral part of our research and scholarship program. Scholars and writers who have lectured in the first five years of the Chair's existence include Ingrid Rimland (novelist), Leo Driedger (sociology), John H. Yoder (historian-theologian), Rudy Wiebe (novelist), Al Reimer (English), Roy Vogt (economics), Victor Doerksen (German), George K. Epp (history), Patrick Friesen (poet), Paul Tiessen (photography), Calvin Redekop (sociology), Walter Klaassen (history), Abram Friesen (German) and Gerhard Ens (editor).

**Community service.** The Chair in Mennonite Studies was established in an area with the largest concentration of Mennonites in the world and at a university located in the heart of a large Canadian city. The university's accessibility to the community places demands upon and provides opportunities for the Mennonite Studies program. Every year we offer an evening credit course which allows working students, both young and old, to further their academic studies.

It has become apparent that some areas of study will have to be expanded. More scholarships for Mennonite Studies should be established to attract and encourage students. We are grateful for the C. A. DeFehr Memorial Scholarships and hope other business people will help establish similar awards.

It is hoped that the planned Mennonite Studies Centre will become a reality.

The vision and material means of Mennonite leaders, of David Friesen and his family, and of the government of Canada through its multicultural department made the establishment of the Mennonite studies program possible. The university's administration, the many colleagues of the two universities and Mennonite colleges, and the friends in the Mennonite community assist and encourage me in every way possible.

*Harry Loewen is the Mennonite Chair at the University of Winnipeg. This report is reprinted by permission from the* University of Winnipeg Journal, *515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9.*

# MEDITATION

## Can babies hear prayer?

My friend Juan lives in simple primitive housing on a small coffee farm. With Juan and his wife lives their granddaughter Marta, who is 22. She had gone through the traumatic experience of becoming an unwed mother and went to live with her grandparents in the country. Marta's life has been difficult since she was raised as an orphan due to a tragedy in early life when her father shot and killed her mother. Now Marta had given birth to a baby girl.

I had gone to visit Juan, and when I was about to leave I told Marta that I would like to see her baby. Marta said she would like for me to pray for the baby and that she wanted to rear the baby with the blessing of God. The month-old baby was awake, and I cradled her in my arms while Marta and Juan stood by me for the prayer.

As I prayed I looked at the baby. Her small face was in repose. "Lord, I pray that the Holy Spirit may fill this life and that your presence and love may abide in her." The baby's face lit up with a smile. I prayed for the mother and the face returned to its tranquil state. I couldn't resist praying once more for the love of God to fill this baby. She smiled again.

I wondered whether an untarnished little soul and spirit from the depths of its subconscious could possibly respond so early and beautifully to the presence of God's Spirit. What was it that made the baby John the Baptist leap in the womb of his mother Elizabeth when Mary spoke in the Spirit? What effect does prayer have on an unborn child or a newly born or even upon the inner life of a retarded one? Perhaps more than we know.

*Gerald Stucky*

## Trying

In the after school-day empty
Of the room and radiator
Hiss comes poetry
To kiss the day—
Forgive that which needs to be
And file the rest away.

Desks are filled
With memories of youth:
Green, unripened goodness.
Names penciled on formica,
Soft gray against a hard white world,
Are easily erased, forgotten,
So is today at Bluffton High!

Great thoughts floated
Through fluorescent sunlight,
Most unnoticed and uncaught.
In the hubbub some have learned
While others left untaught.

The radiator hiss
And the knocking broom
Outside my door
Remind me to bid the day goodbye
And let tomorrow come again
Clean and warm.

*Ruth Naylor*

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To leave home for the first time to study in an open environment can be extremely threatening. It can be like leaving a museum where the emphasis is on preservation and entering a space vehicle where the focus is uncharted territory. Students often feel a profound tension between nostalgia for the past and the beckoning ferment of the future.

Jesus says Christians are to be salt (flavor), light (direction) and leaven (influence). Students can find all of these and be all of these if they so desire. It can't be done alone. It requires the cooperation of home, school and educators. Let's work at it together


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THE MENNONITE

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# editorial

## *Education and Jesus discipleship*

Nobody lives without education; all must learn something. In its broadest sense, education includes all learning—academic, experiential, specific skills and facts, theories and religious beliefs.

This is one of our challenges. Do we advocate only education in general? Is that what students seek? If so, then it makes little difference where you study and who teaches you.

Ours is a time of specialization. People learn to know more and more about less and less. In a time of job scarcity that is dangerous. Narrow specialists often find employment harder to get than those with a more generalist education.

Christian parents and students find the challenges doubly complex. We look for education that nurtures Jesus discipleship. Mennonites expect even more. We hope education will affirm our values and history.

This can be tough on Mennonite students because there is also a general Christian education. It is tempting to settle for this because a generalist approach to Christianity is more widely accepted.

There are many discipleship forms. Some see it as passing out tracts on a street corner, others as providing advocacy for the poor. How do you see it? What do you parents expect for your students? What do you students hope for your faith life? Does it matter?

Here I make a distinction between education and instruction. Instruction can be part of education, but it must be intentionally planned. Put together some Christian staff on a campus and we know students will get some Christian education. But if we expect instruction in the Bible, in Jesus discipleship (as over against some dogmatic, high profile, contemporary person who calls you to follow him or her) and in the Anabaptist/Mennonite understanding of a reconciling faith which doesn't swear oaths of allegiance to any earthly kingdom, that has to be deliberately chosen.

Is it worth the bother to get a Mennonite education? Are other Christians inferior to us? Do we have the best schools?

I'm convinced of the need for Mennonite schools and Mennonite instruction. It can happen at other schools, and I believe there is a time for Mennonites to attend other Christian and secular schools.

The main reason I'm committed to Mennonite instruction is that God wants no "island" disciples. The Great Commission sends us to the entire globe (Matthew 28:19-20), and the Holy Spirit empowers us for anything we can encounter in the world (Acts 1:8).

The servant model of our faith ancestors who went, and still go through today's workers, without the backing of any state, to over 100 countries in the world—from a denomination with less than a million baptized members—is an incredible testimony. To work with other Christians instead of trying to plant more Mennonite churches, is testimony to the general Christian instruction we all need.

Too many Christian schools educate, even instruct, for island discipleship. In my graduate education I chose a summer at one of the most famous evangelical colleges in the world. Imagine my shock when in biblical theology we were instructed to not read books by certain European theologians. I asked the professor how he was preparing me to be a leader for Christ if I was to follow his insight instead of letting the Holy Spirit lead me also among other world thinkers. He graciously agreed but said it was too dangerous for most students; they could not handle controversial teachings. This professor had studied in Europe, and he and I had the greatest times debating European theology.

One other student, 30 years a pastor, noticed my questions in class and one day asked if he could be candid with me. He had been to summer school almost every summer because he couldn't square his Bible studies with his education. He wanted to bring a Greek New Testament to go over some of those problems together.

One morning this elderly pastor embraced me and said, "In some respects I have been reborn, I have become a free person. I now realize I have been a closet pacifist for 30 years, but no matter how long I came to this school they could not affirm that biblical teaching."

It's OK to visit another school and another church. But if you want to learn more about yourself and your family, you need to get into careful, systematic and intentional Mennonite instruction. God's Spirit will surely help you separate wheat from chaff even in our history and faith pilgrimage, not to follow Menno Simons but to become Jesus disciples. *Bernie Wiebe*

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST 99:18 AUGUST 28, 1984

# MWC XI: GOD'S PEOPLE SERVE IN HOPE

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SEP 4 '84

The world is at the brink of self-annihilation, but remember that the final issue can be left with God. I do not mean that we should be idle or become fatalistic; God forbid!

"Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God *entrust* their souls to a faithful Creator in *doing* what is right" (1 Peter 4:19). Consequently, as God's people we are urged not to be afraid . . . the positive and creative as well as realistic and critical way of facing our fear is not to give in or give up but to give the rightful place to Jesus as *Lord* in our hearts. Let him reign supreme! It is only when we have true fear expressed in our upright behavior and in more intelligent and meaningful answers concerning our living hope that all lesser fears, fears of people and of other powers, find no room in our hearts.

We meet in Strasbourg in the . . . Orwellian Year 1984 . . . some of his "newspeaks" . . . bring home our present situation . . . Big Brother . . . lurks everywhere. Our hearing is being drowned and deafened by the slogans:

War is Peace; Freedom is Slavery; Ignorance is Strength.

What shall we do then? . . . Our victorious Lord reminds us that the danger in life is not what people can do to us in the flesh, but what God, the ultimate Judge and the Redeemer, can do to us in the end (Matthew 10:28).

. . . when there is no security anywhere, remember that our security is in God. Around the world people are so confused and frustrated. Untold millions are looking for something or someone to hold on to.

Confessing our hope means . . . giving the sensible answer to whoever asks us why we are what we are. . . . We also ought to share that hope. . . . And the way we confess our hope should be filled with genetleness, courage, forgiveness and reverence (1 Peter 3:10-16).

(from MWC president Charles Christano's presentation at Strasbourg on July 25, "Confessing Our Hope" —1Peter 3:13-17)

# MWC XI:

# people, events and ideas

*Bernie Wiebe*

It struck many as strange. Three words stood out boldly on the banner in Rhemus Hall at Strasbourg, France, July 24-29 during the 11th assembly of the Mennonite World Conference. Some never did discover their literal translation.

In the center front of the assembly, which at times numbered over 7,000 people and whose two primary languages were English and German, nobody could avoid the slogan "Servir Dans L'esperance." I was told by a French-speaking person that a literal translation would be "To Serve in the Hope." The theme of MWC XI was "God's People Serve in Hope."

**The people.** Almost half of the people were from Canada (about 1,000) and the United States (over 2,000). Almost half were from Europe (France has 23 congregations with a total of less than 2,000 Mennonites). Only a small fraction were from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Interest and attendance exceeded all expectations. Some European Mennonites confessed to an early skepticism that gradually gave way to support and involvement in the conference. This was the most notable factor that changed early attendance projections from 5,000 to 6,500. Final registrations were well over 7,000.

Strasbourg offered something for everybody. Consequently there were families with young infants, several honeymooning couples, several hundred children, large numbers of youth and adults ranging in age to those well into their 80s. The peoplehood at MWC XI was a beautiful mosaic. Amando Rodrigues, bishop of the Methodist Church in Cuba and representing Christians in Cuba as a guest of MCC, remarked, "This is the first church conference I have ever attended that seemed so much like a family. I have been amazed at the children and the young people present here."

The people came dressed in the latest European fashions, the native dress of Jamaica, Upper Volta, India and Zimbabwe, jeans, shorts and T-shirts, the Hutterite and Mennonite plain clothes, the formal Umsiedler, the kerchiefed and aproned group from Mexico and the "everything seems appropriate" styles of the Western world.

Wheelchairs, crutches, white canes and hearing aids were always visible here and there in the crowds.

From professors with dual doctorates to Low German-speaking people with only a few years of formal education, the range should have made common communication impossible. But the song and the banners "In Christ there is no east or west . . ." spoke not only for the geography which the Holy Spirit does not recognize, but for the literacy in the Christian fellowship which is more than schooling. Conversations flourished abundantly in smaller and large group settings, at tables and on the long walks between meeting places, standing in lines to cash or exchange currency and while riding the many buses.

Delegations from the Soviet Union (four people), the German Democratic Republic (six people) and from Cuba (one person) added special dimensions to the assembly. As usual, the Soviets generated the most interest. One unique attender was Miguel Angelo Jardim from Portugal. He came on his own after learning about Mennonites from a book. There are no Mennonite churches in Portugal.

Name tags were just that. They gave people's names and countries. For six days you could not tell who were GCs or MBs or EMCs or OMs or any of the other 28 Mennonite flavors. We were God's people called Mennonites.

**The events.** Program planners proclaimed that just about any form of human expression was welcome at Strasbourg, and many art forms were deliberately programmed into sessions. Mime, liturgical reading, poetry, storytelling, instrumental, congregational and choral music of many varieties, lectures, sermons, dialogue presentation, trio presentation, panel, reporting and communion were part of the plenary sessions.

Daily activities included folk dances, sports, a prayer room, arts and crafts exhibits and centers for peace and justice and for women. Over 60 small discussion groups daily followed up the themes presented in plenary. At least one person remarked, "For me the highlight of the Strasbourg experience was the small group in which I shared with six other nationalities. It was an enriching spiritual experience to learn from them and share with them about 1 Peter and its meaning for our lives." There was one large group that featured the theme speakers and a continuing panel. It attracted over 1,000 people at times.

Various interest groups convened ongoing "working groups." These included discussion of the relationship among mission, service and peace witness; development versus trade; East/West relations; Mennonite Health Association; Mennonite Disaster Service; Mennonite Renewal Services; the Hutterian Brethren and ecumenical relationships.

In this area several people voiced strong concerns. A U.S. pastor wondered why there was no working group on preaching and why there was such a disproportionately small number of occasions to hear preachers. Was this a craft

*"Servir Dans L'esperance" greeted us boldly from center stage each day in Rhemus Hall.*

that was being deliberately downplayed? An Umsiedler layman asked me at one point where he could attend a special group on evangelism. There was none. (I encouraged him to attend one on starting a new congregation.) Another person sought a group on working with youth. Still another asked for the group discussing abortion, saying it is currently the area which, next to world hunger, is the leading killer in the world. One other person asked if she could speak with me about divorce and remarriage since there was no group where she felt she could talk about it.

Music ranged from cantata, soprano and organ concert, octet, the musical "Ruth" done in contemporary form by a Dutch youth choir, chamber orchestra, oratorio, children's choir and chancel choir to many other groups.

While "The Abiding Place" oratorio, composed by Esther Wiebe (Barbara Smucker, librettist), was the most magnificent musical piece performed at Strasbourg, the greatest overt audience response was generated by the Diamond Street Choir from Philadelphia. While emotional expression and response can be given in various ways, it seemed that once again it took our brothers and sisters with "soul" to express themselves with more than courteous applause. Could this mean that in our concern for fine music we also need to raise the question of appropriate technology? Did the Diamond Street choir lift us beyond the excellence (technically) in some of the other music? Is there a wholeness of expression we neglect in some of our music?

Another popular part of MWC XI was the daily film festival featuring movies on the Hutterites, Strasbourg, Kampuchea, *Wolfhunter*, *The Persistence of Community*, *And When They Shall Ask*, MCC work in Bolivia, Mennonites in Ontario and Mennonites in South America. Again and again the screening rooms were packed.

For those who wanted to sight see, a half dozen area tours took busloads of people to special places nearby.

And if you wanted to do nothing but talk or have some tea or ice cream, there was always somebody willing to join you. (I tried that on at least 10 occasions.)

**The ideas.** I tried to listen for special ideas and new insights or visions at MWC. In the plenary presentations there seemed to be good biblical exegesis of 1 Peter. Since it is one of my favorite books in the Bible, I hungered for new discoveries. The presentations, however, seemed guardedly cautious, probably due to a concern not to offend such an internationally diverse body. (One speaker confirmed to me that this was what kept him from saying more.)

Most of what was said about application was a repeat of what Mennonite leaders have said since the days of the late H. S. Bender. Choose to be God's people, become disciples of the costly grace variety and throw off the yoke of tradition.

*Winifred Waltner decided to stop for a cup of tea.*

In the plenary sessions only Ron Sider spelled out an active response with a radically new notion of a pacifist peacekeeping force.

Because of many generalities in plenary sessions, listeners often drew their own conclusions. A Canadian said, "I believe this conference is centering everything around peace (shalom), and that is unfortunate. We should be speaking more of right relationships with God and with each other in our churches."

Some Dutch leaders were severely agitated by the male-dominated General Council of MWC. They felt it was overdue that women get equal stature and recognition in the whole church.

Discussions in the larger group tended to readily become cerebral and to reluctantly become specific about praxis. While there was talk about a theology of weakness so that God's strength might be revealed, in practice there was not much evidence on the part of speakers to give testimony of actual vulnerability or confession about real experiences.

**Serving in hope.** When discussions leaned toward self-criticism, there were always those who remembered the conference theme. One speaker said that Mennonites serve only Mennonites. A panelist reminded him of the over 1,000 MCC and other volunteers serving in over 40 countries.

A questioner about evangelism was reminded that conjointly the Mennonite evangelism and missionary force in the world today wins an average of 80 converts per day, and 40 of these eventually join Mennonite congregations.

Criticism of U.S. imperialism led others to share of benefits they have received through U.S. and Canadian services.

Some of the people from Mexico said this was their first world conference and they had found it interesting and stimulating. One of the recently relocated Mennonites (Umsiedler) from Russia to Germany told me he found many of the experiences strange and did not yet know what to make of them. He was, however, staying beyond the special day for the Umsiedler and wanted to learn more.

When the children presented a section of the Saturday worship from their own projects centered around the "Tree of Life," there was an obvious connection between their theme and the conference theme. It was done with spirit and generated joyous hope.

The courtesy of the work campers (about 40 youth from many countries) and the European volunteers (many were youth from the hosting churches) also spoke of "servir dans l'esperance."

There was no obvious buildup in MWC XI. Rather, there were seeds of hope in many places. Some had to be dug out, others sprouted before one's eyes in unmistakable fashion. Some hope came in what I heard and felt. Other hope came in people I met. The most hope probably came to those who dared to share themselves with others. In so doing many served others with a portion of God's hope that all people need. Insofar as all the thousands at Strasbourg represented the other hundreds of thousands in their home congregations when they opened themselves to other Mennonites in the world, to that extent we are God's people serving in hope. And what we are now can grow as we build on the past with an eager yearning to be even more faithful in the future. •

*Two kids: Richard Doerksen (Switzerland) in wheelchair and Susan Duerksen (on way home from India to Winnipeg), both 13. Speaking to them is writer Dorothy Harnish.*

# I came from Strasburg to Strasbourg

*Dorothy M. Harnish*

Bittersweet rootage
Tear at my demitasse spoon
Stirred faith—mission
*Strasbourg haiku, MWC 1984*

I was born in the small town Strasburg, Pa. In Strasbourg, France, I reflected upon the journeys of those around me as I heard it on the way and at MWC XI. I smile now as I recall my first fledgling faith steps toward this Strasbourg. I was a freshman at Lancaster Mennonite High School; she was a senior, my idol. One day as we walked from class to class she told me that in Mennonite history class she had learned all about Michael Sattler and the meeting in Strasbourg in 1527. With eagerness I responded, "I didn't know he was in Strasburg!" "Strasbourg, France," she said gently, "Not Strasburg, Pennsylvania." So began my journey toward an understanding of Anabaptist history.

I shall remember MWC XI as a meeting place of the historic Anabaptist vision and the indigenous Anabaptist vision. Historic Anabaptist vision and indigenous vision have much to do with each other, I think, though some think otherwise and have said so here. Both have no foundation other than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Some say ethnic identity is of little value. But each of us has an ethnic identity which cannot be denied. This identity provides a basis for communication. The bringing together of these identities creates an expression of wholeness and richness.

Not only do our ethnic identities provide a gift each of us can contribute to the blended tapestry, it is the heritage that provides a key to our hope. Elie Wiesel, a Jewish writer and a survivor of Nazi Germany and its concentration camps, wrote, "A man without a past is poorer than a man without a future." Indeed, can a person have a future without a past? Many, of course, idolize the secular and the modern and have no regard for history. But history is its own interpreter. It is of no small consideration that the Bible is a book of history. It both records history and is itself history.

**On the road.** My journey to Strasbourg included working with a group of 24 high school students from Canada and the United States en route to the conference. After a worship service in the courtyard of the castle in Alzey, Germany, where 350 Anabaptists were executed, we drove toward Strasbourg.

I asked three kids what they anticipated at MWC. Robin Bryant: "I look forward to people worshiping together from all over. Sometimes the Mennonite church is insensitive to non-whites, not intentionally but because we don't know how to relate to each other." Monique Enns: "It will be different. I want to meet people from other places. I want to see the Mennonite church as a gigantic whole. I want to see what this looks like. What do I belong to? I just want to sit and absorb. I tried not to form any preconceived ideas or prejudices." Kathy Schmidt: "Big conferences are good. They give a reflective feeling. I was at Wichita and I remember the feeling of the big tie with people from many places. I especially remember the closing service. I am looking for a fresh faith here. We get too caught up in the politics of the church. We have an ethnic background and it is important, but it doesn't make one superior. You aren't a Mennonite just because you can make 'noodle suppe.' "

**At the conference.** I sought out old friends from Australia, Ian and Anne Duckham. When I asked, "What do you anticipate in your being here?" their immediate response was, "fellowship for a change. We want to receive input. It is a time for refurbishing of the Anabaptist vision, reshaping it if necessary. We look forward to meeting people in similar situations as we are in planting the Anabaptist vision. I just met some people from Ireland and from Sweden." As natives of Australia, white but unable to play the Mennonite game, Ian and Anne shared their concern for retaining those

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*Three students: Robin Bryant (Chicago), Monique Enns (Ottawa) and Kathy Schmidt (Newton, Kan.). Robin is black, Kathy has short hair, Monique wears glasses. In center is writer Dorothy Harnish.*

*The three Mennonites from the Soviet Union, pastors Janzen (left) and Tiessen (right) from Orenburg and Jacob Fast (center) from Novosibirsk, faced full houses in their meetings at Strasbourg.*

things that are precious to the heritage. "What are those things that are precious?" I prodded. In seven seconds, we are told, we can be wiped out by nuclear war. So what is central? With a twinkle in his eye, Ian reminded me that the Lord is going to come in a moment—not seven long seconds—and then went on to share these central concerns to their planting of the Anabaptist vision in Australia: (1) concern for community, (2) the peace perspective as the central message of the Christian faith, (3) caring for devalued people and (4) becoming a biblically based people.

I watched children arrive at morning worship. They ran eagerly. Richard spun the wheels on his wheelchair and talked about walking with his friends through Strasbourg the day before, finding the swimming pool and going for a dip. I asked Richard what he thought he would remember from MWC. In perfect English he responded, "Oh, there's much to remember." With sparkling enthusiasm he recalled the Kinder program. "Is anything different than you expected?" I asked. "The food is better than I expected," he said with a grin.

Susan Duerksen was on her way to Canada from Calcutta, India. It's not easy to be on your way from India to Winnipeg and stop along the way with jute bag thongs when you are 13. She reflected on the past three years in India. "It's hard to explain. It's just different. There are parts you like and parts you don't like. It's just . . . well, different." "What would you like to say about your activities here?" I asked. "I like the joking around. I can talk and people know what I mean; I don't have to explain. I like playing games with lots of kids because in India there weren't many kids I could play with."

Are all conferences the same to veteran conference goers? I asked Vernon Leis, pastor of the Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont. Wichita, he said, had a global impact. Strasbourg's impact will be for the European Mennonites. For them it will be a support. For U.S. and Canadian Mennonites it should broaden our horizons and our identity.

One of the ways to broaden one's horizon was to attend the workshop working groups. As I approached the group on Concerns of Physically Disabled Persons, a participant in a wheelchair said enthusiastically, "That must be the place, I see wheelchairs." Here people from several countries shared projects in which they are involved. Josef Giger was born in Austria; he was born with cerebral palsy. The school opportunities in Austria ended long before Josef's enthusiasm for learning and his ability to learn. He went to Germany where he has completed what is available to him there. He wants to study in the United States and Canada. He is on his way now to investigate possibilities. Peter, Josef's assistant, said, "Josef is in the situation of a normal young man who wants to plan his career. He has assessed his potential. He has a reasonable plan." Josef came to MWC to tell his story in hope. When I put my arm around him and thanked him for telling his story, I wanted a way to be made. I have his address in my little book. Working groups are more than a slot to fill in the MWC agenda.

With Josef on my mind I got as close as I could to the Soviet Union interest group . . . outside the door. The Russian brethren were used to people outside the door. People outside the door is a happy problem they work at in the Soviet Union. The story told there was that "we live in a divided world. We fear their system and they fear ours. We are aware of our ignorance of each other. We need a conversion of our attitudes in our thinking. Then our friendship can have reality." Stories were told of visits of North Americans to families. We who like to do things with our plastic credit cards were invited to Russia to visit our brothers and sisters, to stand alongside them and sit where they sit in love. *Part one of a two-part series* •

# Isaiah speaks today

*Menno S. Kaufman*

**Isaiah spoke to Judah.** "Cry out, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet. . ." (Isaiah 58:1a). The people of Judah inquire, ". . . why have we fasted and thou seest it not? Why have we humbled ourselves and thou takest no knowledge of it?" (Isaiah 58:3). The people of Judah were puzzled.

**Does Isaiah speak today?** Why should we pray and go through the form of worship? Nothing changes, evil is running rampant and God doesn't seem to hear us. Just look at the situation.

1. *The communist threat.* Step by step we are losing to godless communism. We have lost our political influence in Vietnam; in Lebanon a major setback. In Central America our influence is drastically threatened.

2. *Our military problems are mounting.* Our constantly increasing military might is being matched by communism's military might. We are making great sacrifices to maintain military superiority. We neglect some of our poor and have lightened the tax burden of the rich to strengthen the backbone of our country.

3. *In defense of our business interests and our standard of living.* Lord, you must understand that on an international basis we must defend the high standard of living you have given to your privileged people in the United States.

4. *Our sacrifice requires your assistance.* Lord, we have already indebted our future generations more than one trillion dollars without any knowledge of how future generations will be able to pay this debt. You may have to pitch in, Lord, and help. Our increasing national debt is going to be your problem, Lord, because we are your people.

5. *A plus on our side.* We do have a plus on our side, Lord. We hope to introduce prayer into our public schools.

6. *A minus that you must overlook, Lord.* On the minus side, you must understand that we absolutely cannot give the poor in the Third World our major consideration. Our hands are full protecting the global wealth with which you have blessed us.

7. *Enlighten our enemies, Lord.* Lord, a final request. Enlighten all leaders and others in foreign countries who are under the illusion that we are foreign devils. We want only to defend our national interest on a worldwide basis and our high standard of low, self-centered (more or less) living to which we are entitled, since you have blessed us with this material wealth because we are a Christian nation. Have you not promised, Lord, that we will be the future rulers?

*One of the compelling messages of Isaiah is for us to choose appropriate weapons as people of God. He urges nations to turn swords into plowshares, spears into pruning hooks . . . (guns into respect for the Word?).*

**Isaiah's answer to us in 1984.** Isaiah said he would not be quiet until things got better. Therefore the Lord speaks to us through Isaiah even in 1984.

1. *An empty prayer.* "Behold in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure and oppress all your workers. Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours on this day will not make your voice to be heard on high" (Isaiah 58:3b-4).

2. *Return unto the Lord.* Then how shall we fast (pray and worship) to be heard on high? Isaiah does have messages of hope. ". . . let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, let him return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on him . . . for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). What then happens—when we are abundantly pardoned on his terms—is fantastic.

3. *Focus on the Lord's priorities.* Fast (pray and worship) to loosen the chains of injustice, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke of the afflicted, to draw out your souls and spend yourselves, to give bread to the hungry, to provide the poor wanderer with shelter and to clothe the naked (Isaiah 58:6-7, 9-10).

In his Spirit remove the stumbling blocks. You must pray and worship in his Spirit. In other words, take away three stumbling blocks to Christian faith. You must take away your yoke of oppression of others in your midst (that includes all of your relationships in which you tend to take advantage of others). You must take away the pointing of the finger and malicious talk (blaming others rather than taking personal responsibility for your sins of omission and commission). You must take away vanity (that shallow pride and conceit in your appearance and in your attainment—Isaiah 58:9-10).

**God intends infinite blessings for us.** If you shall fast (pray and worship) in his Spirit for the reasons submitted by Isaiah, then the Lord will abundantly pardon and his blessings will be upon you in many ways. "Then your light will

break forth like the dawn and your healing will quickly appear, then your righteousness will go before you and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call on the Lord and he will answer. You will cry for help, and the Lord will say, 'Here am I.' . . . And the Lord will guide you always. He will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail" (Isaiah 58:8, 9a, 11).

**Prayers that God answers.** God answers the prayers of those who show concern to God and to their fellow beings. God answers the prayers of those who have a concern for the poor (the least of these) and for those with a spiritual thirst. Many of the spiritually thirsty do not even know they have a spiritual thirst and have wandered far from the truth. It may be our commission to help make them aware of their spiritual hunger.

**Isaiah speaks to us.** As we tune in to Isaiah's cry and hear him lift his voice like a trumpet, what do we hear individually and collectively? Do we hear his urging to address the spiritually hungry (first at our elbow and then the more distant)? Do we hear his call to reach out to the poor who are being used and abused?

*Our response.* How effective is our fasting, prayer and worship? What service does God have in store for each of us? Are we like well-watered gardens? Like the spring whose waters never fail as we relate to our fellow beings? Or have we not tuned in to Isaiah's spiritual message to us in 1984?

*Another compelling image of Isaiah is that of servanthood. God's people shall be as suffering servants in the world. What is your image in the world?*

*Menno S. Kaufman, Route 2, Newton, KS 67114, has been Sunday school teacher of the Men's Balcony Class at First Church, Newton, for 33 years. He sees Isaiah's message to us as critically urgent.*

## Reminder to Sunday school teachers

*Dennis Lehman*

They hurt Jesus with tongue, a cross,
and used the spear needlessly,
saying, "He's a blasphemer, a friend of sinners,
a lawbreaker, the King of the Jews,"
not knowing what they were doing.

We can cause suffering with tongue,
the cross of injustice,
and use the spear needlessly,
saying, "We love God."
Father, forgive us if we know not what we do.

# *A day after* The Day After

*Walfried Goossen*

Jack was not a guy you would notice anywhere, not a type you think of when you cast a movie about war heroes. A devoted husband and father of nine, he was simply a nice fellow. Small, frail and graying, he was characterized by a bent frame and stooped posture. Good things come in small packages. Jack was a good man.

Among friends he was famous for his humor and generosity. I was sure he was a friend when we sat at the table in his kitchen and swapped memories of World War II. Memories of the '40s were a problem for him and for me. The bad outnumbered the good and they came together; there was no separating them.

His wife, Agnes, showed me an old newspaper clipping. He had rescued two of his crew from his aircraft after it was shot down in Europe. But sadly he remembered best the one he was unable to pull free before the craft exploded. He still felt guilty. Being a hero wasn't entirely satisfying.

I was 5 years old when the war ended, too young to qualify for decorations. The suffering of my family was of the innocent bystander quality, an "unfortunate circumstance" of war.

Our family was living at the Oberzell convent outside the German city of Würzberg when allied aircraft attacked the city on March 16, 1945. Würzburg ironically is the city mentioned in the movie *The Day After* as the first target (a school and convent) for Soviet missiles. Most of the inhabitants had evacuated. Some watched from the hills and countryside as 80 percent of the city was destroyed. We didn't know what hit us. (I know what will hit us next time and therefore won't have an opportunity for hindsight.)

Thirty-two years later I learned that 360,000 bombs plus countless gelee canisters, incendiary bombs, were used that day—conventional weapons for which some yearn today to make just wars safer and more just. It took less than 20 minutes to level the city which was first settled around 1000 B.C. by the Celts.

Würzburg is now fully rebuilt. Its new buildings are a reminder of human destruction, the human will to live and the grace of God.

As I shared this story with Jack and Agnes, he said cautiously, "I was in Germany then, on bombing missions."

I wasn't looking at him or surely I would have blinked and perhaps choked in an effort to disguise my feelings, and he would have noticed. My silence was at least ambiguous. But he had probably learned to hear unspoken words. In the raucous cacophany of war there are many silences, many unspeakable words.

I wasn't enraged. I was just irritated that this fine man, or someone like him, had dropped bombs on me when I was 5, and on my family. We were no threat to him.

We soon shifted to other aspects of war. But it lingered in my mind that those who liberated us, who enabled us to come to Canada to start a new life, had almost killed us, almost robbed us of the opportunity for freedom and the pursuit of happiness.

I didn't share this with him. It would have been unfair after so many years. We both had a few live bombs slumbering in our guts. We both wanted no more violence.

Neither of us could explain the confusion and madness of war. When you get past the political and military rhetoric about the strategy—the philosophical inanities about the need for the innocent to suffer in times of war—it just doesn't make sense.

I don't know whether he was in fact in one of those bombers which flew over Würzburg in the spring of 1945. I didn't ask. If he was, he sure looked different to me across the kitchen table than he did when he was a dark mystery in a growling death machine which obscured the sun, silenced the birds and stopped our games in the convent yard.

I remember watching him sit quietly in his lovely home sipping his coffee. (I'm so glad he, someone, missed me in Würzburg. I was enjoying my coffee too.) His graying hair and thinning cheeks didn't dampen his hospitality. I know the man who navigated bombers was just another weapon produced by a military machine to which people are "resources."

This man sitting opposite me was a gentle human being who wouldn't hurt a fly and certainly not a friend, not me.

A few years later he passed away, not yet 60, due to ill health precipitated by the war. His wife, now also deceased, was at last a war widow.

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# Toward a harmonious 'Dialogue on Faith'

*Jacob Tilitzky*

Recently the Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church (Clearbrook, B.C.) male chorus sang an interesting medley fondly called: "Ein lustiges Quodlibet" (A Merry Potpourri). The medley consisted of three distinct tunes, each sounding good on its own. But then a group sang the first tune and a group sang the second tune simultaneously. That sounded good. A third group joined in with the third song and still there was unity and harmony.

What made it possible for all three tunes to be sung at once with such harmonic effect? They were all written in the same key, all in three-quarter time, the notes in proper harmonic relation, and the groups followed the direction of one conductor.

The General Conference with its motto of "Unity in Diversity" could be compared to the "Merry Potpourri," though not always that merry. We have learned a number of individual theological tunes. We sing them well, and most do not sound that bad. But can we sing them together with good harmonious effect?

We've been invited to Camp Wonderland near Camp Lake, Wis., for a "Dialogue on Faith" Oct. 26-28. I am excited about it. People representing congregations and institutions from across the continent coming together to present their views (tunes), to seriously listen to each other and to seek ways of performing together.

This is no first for the General Conference and certainly no first for the Christian church. A long time ago, about A.D. 40, diverse groups of Christians came together in Jerusalem to seek theological harmony in their complex issues (Acts 15), and they came away with some beautiful harmony.

We too will come away from Camp Wonderland in harmony and unity of purpose if:

- All our tunes are held in the same key of C for Christ. Any deviation, sharp or flat, will distort the harmony.
- We are in time with the sign of the times and for a specific time for which we have been called.
- We are in right relationship to each other—not shouting to drown out each other, not competing with each other, but enhancing one another through our right position on God's scale.
- We follow our Conductor the Holy Spirit as he works to bring out the true score of God's Word.

"Do you honestly believe we can come away from our 'Dialogue on Faith' with any semblance of harmony at this troubled stage in our history?" you ask. Not if we just take it for granted. Not if we leave it to the next person. But through sincere and persevering prayer and our commitment to the fulfillment of that prayer we can.

*Jacob Tilitzky, 2201 Queen Road, Route 1, Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3, is president of the General Conference.*

*Esther Wiebe's oratorio "The Abiding Place" was the most spectacular musical production of MWC XI. It incorporated special singing by the Mennonite Children's Choir (center left), the special oratorio choir (center right) and made room also for the Umsiedler choir (front left), the Diamond Street choir (far right) and a brass quartet (upper center). Conductors visible are Helen Litz and George Wiebe. "We have learned a number of individual theological tunes. . . . Can we sing them together with good harmonious effect?"*

**Refusing to manufacture weapons** or military goods has not meant hardship for the Vermont-American Corp. According to *American Metal Market*, the company, which manufactures cutting tools, had sales of $181.8 million and profits of more than $6.6 million in 1983. Lee B. Thomas, who heads the company, became a Quaker in the late 1940s after having been in the U.S. Army in World War II and passed through Hiroshima less than a month after the bomb.

**For every eight minutes** on prime-time television there is a depiction of physical assault, every 20 minutes an attempted murder, every 2½ hours an actual murder. These statistics, says the International Coalition Against Television Violence, both reflect and stimulate real-life violence. "We're murdering people 300 percent more often per capita than our parents' generation," says Thomas Radecki, an Illinois psychiatrist who heads the U.S. chapter of the coalition. ICATV has released findings of a 22-year study which estimates that TV and movie violence is the cause of at least 25-50 percent of violence worldwide.

# NEWS

## Variety, history mark MWC at Strasbourg

Strasbourg, France—A Methodist bishop from Cuba came. And four Russians. And at highest attendance there were an estimated 8,000 at Strasbourg 1984, a little over 1 percent of the world's Mennonite population.

The 11th Mennonite World Conference, held here July 24-29, was the seventh Mennonite conference to be held in Strasbourg but the first to be held here for more than 350 years. The sixth convened in 1607.

According to students of Anabaptist history, Strasbourg was more open to the early Anabaptists than many other cities of Europe. Instead of killing them, this city was more likely to ask them to leave. In 1984 Strasbourg was considerably friendlier. The mayor addressed the opening session.

The program of the 11th assembly was multifaceted, and attendants participated according to interest and opportunity. At times there seemed to be 7,000 different agendas. Foundation of the program was the morning worship and Bible lecture period followed by discussion groups. Next in overall importance were the evening variety programs. For the afternoon, options were multiplied. Some viewed films; some attended interest or working groups; some went on local tours; some visited exhibits or chatted with friends; some took naps.

The Diamond Street choir from Philadelphia rated highest on the convention "applause meter." Indeed, several times the audience began to applaud before the singers were finished. The choir also brought out the photographers in an "altar call" reminiscent of a Billy Graham revival. This honor was shared with a program given by the children of conference attendees.

*From left: Gilberto Flores, Hector Valencia, Takio Tanase*

Attendance distribution was about as expected. The conference released only one precise registration tally, followed by estimates. The final registration estimate was 7,250 and the estimated Sunday morning attendance was 8,000. The distributed figures released earlier show half from North America and a relative few from the Southern Hemisphere:

- 2,115 from the United States,
- 961 from Canada,
- 609 from France,
- 600 from the Netherlands,
- 282 from Switzerland,
- 109 from other European countries,
- 94 from Taiwan,
- 56 from Japan,
- 383 from the rest of the world.

If one assumes that most of the additional 2,000 came from the Europeans, well over one-third of the 2,000 French Mennonites may have been present at some time during the sessions. But it is worth noting that the 94 from Taiwan made up close to 10 percent of the 1,000-

*More than 7,000 people attended the 11th Mennonite World Conference*

**A former member of the Salvadoran treasury police,** now a refugee in a suburban church sanctuary, says he participated in torture sessions and a rape while in El Salvador, according to a *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* story. Rene Hurtado, a pseudonym used to protect his family, said he tortured prisoners during interrogations, using techniques he was taught by the U.S. Army Green Berets. The treasury police, he said, consider themselves followers of Hitler and Mussolini. In December 1982, Hurtado was given illegal sanctuary at St. Luke's Presbyterian Church in Wayzata, a wealthy Minneapolis suburb.

**An invitation to send 20 Mennonite representatives** to an Ecumenical Service of Praise with Pope John Paul II was received by Mennonite Central Committee Canada. The invitation to the Sept. 22 service came from G. Emmett Cardinal Carter, Archbishop of Toronto. In his letter of invitation Cardinal Carter noted that this ecumenical service is the "only one of its kind during the Papal tour." It will be held at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto. J. M. Klassen, executive director of MCC Canada, sent the names of 10 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conference leaders and their spouses to Cardinal Carter and expressed gratitude.

**Urban statistics:** 42.8 percent of the residents of Miami speak a language other than English at home. San Antonio, Texas, has the second highest percentage of non-English speakers in the United States with 42.5 percent. New York City follows with 30.1 percent. Meanwhile, 71 percent of the population of Atlanta has not graduated from high school. San Antonio and Washington follow close behind. (*SCUPE*)

member Mennonite Church. On a percentage basis, this was well ahead of the North American representation.

What was Strasbourg 1984? It was one part worship, one part Sunday school, one part family reunion and many other parts too numerous to catalog. It was not an orderly meeting. In spite of regular appeals from the rostrum against the use of "flash" photography there were repeated violations. At any given time there were as likely to be people leaving the assembly as entering it.

Though there were stirring addresses, the conference issued no public statement. In the discussion group I attended the time ran out as in Sunday school before we were ready to commit ourselves.

Some participants were bemused by the varied positions represented.

Cory Miller asked, "Who are the Mennonites? What are our commonalities? I can't get anyone to say more than a warm fuzzy feeling."

Harold Jantz wondered, "Is this conference bringing unity or alienation? I find myself in great tension when I hear the Dutch young people speaking." He referred to an evening presentation which emphasized social issues at the expense of theological clarity.

But Jose E. Jarquin Palacios of the Brethren in Christ in Nicaragua said that he will report back to his people that "we are not alone. Many brothers are thinking and looking to Nicaragua."

The next MWC assembly will convene in Winnipeg in 1990. *Daniel Hertzler*

## New MWC General Council elected

Strasbourg, France (MWC)—The new General Council of the XII Assembly of the Mennonite World Conference elected the following as members of the executive committee on July 28, at the close of the XI Assembly:

President—Ross Bender (United States)
First vice president—Jacob F. Pauls (Canada)
Vice president, Europe—Samuel Gerber (Nuglar) (Switzerland)
Vice president, Africa—Mbonza Kikunga (Zaire)
Vice president, Central/South America—Luis Elier Rodriquez (Puerto Rico)
Vice president, Asia—Hiroshi Yanada (Japan)
Recording secretary—Helen Kruger (Canada)
Members at large—Louise Nussbaumer (France), Victor Adrian (Canada).

Paul N. Kraybill and Ray Schlichting were re-elected as executive secretary and treasurer, respectively, for the XII Assembly.

The council also acted to accept an invitation from the Winnipeg churches and conferences to hold the XII Assembly in Winnipeg in 1990.

**Deacons of churches** affiliated with the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba will meet for their annual retreat Oct. 19-21 at Camp Assiniboia. Bernie and Marge Wiebe of Winnipeg will be resource people. The theme for the retreat is "Deacons and Their Own Families." Participants should preregister by Oct. 5.

**The Mennonite College of Nursing** in Bloomington, Ill., has been granted candidacy status for accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. The college admitted its first class in September 1983 with 29 students. Students enter the college at the junior level upon completion of 60 semester hours of specified course work at accredited colleges or universities. Taking all nursing courses at the college, the students graduate with a bachelor's degree in nursing.

**Transformation** is a new quarterly magazine of social ethics published by the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. "Since a majority of Christians now live outside the Western industrialized nations, it is important to improve the exchange of ideas among all parts of the church worldwide," say the magazine's three senior editors, Ron Sider, Vinay Samuel of India and Tokunboh Adeyemo of Nairobi, Kenya. *Transformation* promises to tackle a variety of issues, including human rights, economics, the family, theology and the biblical basis for social ethics.

# Dutch Mennonite couple works in Guatemala

Guatemala City (MCC)—His letters from home come addressed to Jaap. Guatemalan working companions call him Jacobo. Mennonite Central Committee workers refer to him as Jacob.

Dutch Mennonite Jaap Schiere, his wife, Annelies, and two small children are now used to multiple names, languages and cultures. Unlike most North Americans living overseas who make only one major cultural adjustment, the Schieres have made two. While maintaining their Dutch language and family customs, they work with Spanish-speaking Guatemalans and find fellowship with English-speaking MCC workers.

The Schieres, who are jointly appointed by MCC and the European International Mennonite Organization, enjoy being part of a diverse MCC family in Guatemala. That family is made even more multicultural with a Paraguayan-Guatemalan family, Victor and Alicia Martinez, who serve as interim country representatives.

Although this diversity sometimes causes misunderstanding, it is also like a spice that flavors fine food. The Schieres, along with 14 other non-North Americans serving in MCC overseas programs, bring unique skills and experiences that benefit both their work and the MCC team.

Annelies, a nurse, works alongside a Guatemalan doctor training health leaders who serve low-income Indian families living near Guatemala City. She prepares educational materials and has written several grant requests to supplement MCC's program funding.

As a result of her work, the Dutch Embassy in Guatemala donated $6,000 for medical equipment, and the Dutch Interchurch Assistance Agency gave $10,000 to purchase Incaparina, a high protein cereal blend for children suffering from malnutrition.

*The Schiere family—Jacob, Marcus and Annelies with Nelleke—relax in their backyard in Guatemala City.*

High-powered batteries seem to energize Annelies as she combines her health work with the task of mothering two small children. She recalls that some nights during her recent pregnancy when the baby's kicking kept her awake she'd "just get up at three o'clock and start working."

Although trained as a nurse, Annelies does not assume that her European medical knowledge can provide ready-made answers for Guatemalan public health problems. For example, she relies on the Guatemalan doctor and a veteran missionary in Central America to explain the need for a family planning component to pastors who give overall leadership to the health program.

Jaap towers a good foot or so above most of the Guatemalan Indians he advises on appropriate technology projects. But his manner communicates mutual respect. One would hardly guess that this ruddy Frieslander with clay smeared across his faded work pants was for five years the manager of a major restoration project in a legislative building in the Hague.

Jaap may have parted with prestige and an excellent salary, but the professional excellence that guided his work in the Hague is evident in the projects he promotes among Guatemalan peasants.

"People need flowers in their lives," he explains. For this reason he is concerned that an efficient wood-burning "lorena" stove not only conserve wood but that it also add aesthetic beauty to the house. When he promotes the stove he does not dwell long on the problems of deforestation, but rather questions, "Wouldn't you like to keep enjoying those shade trees?"

Some friends are critical of the Schiere's involvement in Guatemala and question MCC's presence in a country with a poor human rights record. Are you not merely aiding a corrupt system? they ask. Jaap also struggles with that question but concludes that if he were to refuse to work in Guatemala he would be unable to help the young health leader who just requested assistance in introducing his lorena stoves to his village.

"If I were merely doing technical work which can be destroyed by war or societal upheaval, then the criticism would be valid," continues Jaap. "But teaching people to do the work themselves gives them something that lasts—something to rebuild with even if there is a catastrophe."

Jaap reflects that his hands were probably dirtier when he worked in the Hague. His last task was to design a conference table for a top parliamentarian. "They will discuss nuclear missile deployment around that table," he laments. "Can helping poor Guatemalans be worse?"

Many people also question the Schiere's move from a high-paying job to voluntary service. The Schieres believe meaningful work and activities are more important than elegant entertaining, fancy meals and the expectations of a higher income. *Joetta Handrich Schlabach*

**Ernie Regehr,** writing in the March issue of the *Ploughshares Monitor*, calls for an evaluation of the basis on which Canada participates in U.S. defense systems. He says that Canada officially views deterrence as the assured destruction of the other side with a retaliatory strike. But the United States, he says, is developing weapons so that it will have the capability of making a pre-emptive first strike and of fighting a prolonged nuclear war and that Canada is participating in these U.S. developments without clear policy reasons of its own.

**Peace—Not War—In 84** is the name of a series of nationwide actions for peace and disarmament to be held Sept. 22-24. People throughout the United States are expected to blockade and demonstrate at weapons facilities and military installations. Peace—Not War—In 84 is coordinated by Mobilization for Survival, a national coalition of local peace groups, and will include both legal protests and non-violent civil disobedience. MFS is calling for a reversal of the nuclear buildup, an end to military intervention abroad and a transfer of funds from the military to social programs.

**Christians concerned about hunger** gathered in Washington June 23-27 and called upon President Reagan to "go stand among the starving masses in Africa" and see the misery claiming the lives of millions in 24 drought-stricken nations. The statement was one of five resolutions adopted by 170 Bread for the World members from across the United States who attended the organization's 1984 National Leadership Gathering.

# Kampuchean soap maker survives ordeals

Kompong Cham, Kampuchea (MCC)—Mr. Dee, as usual, was not saying much. But his smile relayed satisfaction as he and a dozen barebacked laborers unloaded 10 tons of new machinery at the abandoned Kompong Cham soap factory.

The equipment was a gift from Mennonite Central Committee to the residents of a struggling country.

The people of Kampuchea, a small Southeast Asian country formerly called Cambodia, are picking up the pieces of lives torn apart by many years of war and the maniacal destruction by a mad leader. Dee's story is typical of the pain his people have experienced.

Dee lived in a Kampuchean village about 30 miles north of the town of Kompong Cham as a child, working with his parents and brothers in the rice fields. Too poor to continue supporting his studies, his parents sent him to Kompong Cham to learn soapmaking after his graduation from seventh grade.

When a 1970 coup deposed Prince Sihanouk, the country's leader, Dee returned to his village and, with his brothers, set up a small soap-making business. His village was soon torn apart by political divisions among revolutionary groups and those who supported the new pro-U.S. government of Lon Nol. Bitter fighting soon engulfed the whole country as U.S. B52s unleashed massive bombings on areas suspected of harboring communist guerrillas—the Khmer Rouge and their Viet Cong allies. The guerrillas fought back savagely.

The area that Dee's family lived in was controlled by the Khmer Rouge forces, led by Pol Pot.

"During the war one of my uncles was killed in a bomb attack on our village," Dee said, "and the village was often strafed by low-flying planes." The Khmer Rouge accused another uncle of belonging to a rival revolutionary group, and he died in prison.

*Dee, standing in the center wearing a white shirt, goes over plans for installing equipment in Kompong Cham soap factory with Ken Minoda, left, a short-term MCC technician, members of several provincial committees and a person from the Ministry of Industry.*

After their victory over the Lon Nol government in 1975, the Khmer Rouge sent Dee to Kompong Cham to work in a soap production collective along with 30 others. "We lived and ate from a big common pot. The food wasn't good and there was never enough, but we had to eat it to survive," he said. The work was hard and the hours long, Dee explained. There was no machinery. Everything was done by hand.

For three years Dee worked in the soap factory. "The soap was given to the high Khmer Rouge officials," he explained, "and once a year a few villagers would receive a bite-sized piece as well."

In 1977 he heard that the local Khmer Rouge leaders planned to choose wives for all single men in his group, so Dee asked his parents to quickly arrange a marriage partner for him.

"Four couples were married at the same time in a one-hour ceremony," said Dee. "We sat facing each other and a Khmer Rouge official stood up to make the announcement that from now on we would live together." But after a three-day break from work, Dee was sent to a neighboring province to work for four months. His wife went back to her village until his return.

In January 1979, when Vietnamese troops were advancing toward Kompong Cham in an assault on Pol Pot's regime, Khmer Rouge soldiers ordered the people to leave with them. "But the soldiers were more afraid than anyone else, so they left first, and we all went back to our villages," Dee noted.

After the Vietnamese had driven the Khmer Rouge out of the country and helped set up a new government, Dee went back to Kompong Cham to enlist as a soldier. "I was so angry at Pol Pot that I just had to fight him," he explained.

But the new authorities in Kompong Cham knew of his experience in soapmaking and asked him to organize soap production instead of going to the Thai-Kampuchean border to fight the remnants of Pol Pot's forces.

He and some others spent most of 1980 completing a building for the soap factory. Production began on a small scale. But hampered by lack of power and an efficient way to extract oil from oil-producing seeds, the factory soon closed.

Now, because of the $25,000 worth of oil-expelling equipment and related hardware given by MCC, the factory is producing soap again.

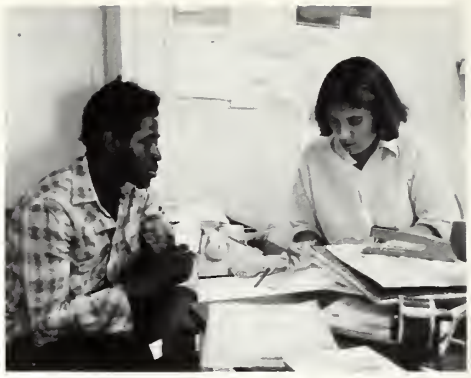
"I want to thank MCC for the machines," Dee said. "The other soap makers and I are happy that we can make our own soap again and will not have to import it anymore. We will work hard to help our people."

Dee now lives with his wife and two children in Kompong Cham. One would think that after the brutal years of war and Pol Pot, Kampucheans would be looking out for themselves only. But it is not uncommon to find people like Dee who are committed to their work and concerned for the welfare of their people.

*Fred Kauffman*

**"Up and Away"** is the theme of the annual Bethel College Fall Festival, to be held Sept. 27-30 at its campus in North Newton, Kan. One week later, on Oct. 6, the Bethel College Women's Association will celebrate its 50th anniversary at a special salad luncheon, to which all Western District women are invited.

**Monica Wiebe** (at right in photo) has been serving as a Mennonite Central Committee volunteer with the Haitian community in Belle Glade, Fla., since November 1982. Nearly a third of Belle Glade's 18,000 people are Haitian. Wiebe's job title is nutritionist, but she takes people to doctors' offices and clinics and translates for them. She makes home visits with and for the public health nurse and offers some nutrition counseling and education on an informal basis. Other tasks include secretarial work, maintaining office supplies and equipment and filling out income tax returns for Haitians who do not understand the tax system.



# The weak teach compassion, says speaker on disabled

Winnipeg (MCCC)—As a teenager in North Carolina, George Durner played football with friends. Often while they played, an uncoordinated, disabled man named Stanford would ask to play. Repeatedly they said no.

"You can't run," they said. And off Stanford would go, running in his own awkward, sideways style, to show them he could. He'd go about 20 feet before he fell.

"We told you so," George and his friends said, laughing.

Twenty years later George was back in North Carolina, visiting his parents. As he packed his car trunk for the trip back to Canada, he glanced up to see Stanford walking down the lane toward him.

The years had changed George Durner. This time he didn't laugh but saw the person Stanford was. As the two men shook hands, George was grateful that Stanford still cared for him, and he regretted not treating Stanford years ago as the person he was.

Now the director of the L'Arche Community in Winnipeg, George Durner spoke June 3 at "Whole, Yet Disabled: A Celebration of Life in Christ," an MCC Manitoba awareness event held at Carman (Man.) Gospel Light Mennonite Brethren Church.

Speaking to more than 200 people at the morning service, Durner said that God came in weakness in Jesus, that we learn to love in the face of weakness and that we can see Christ in the poor, the hungry and the weak.

God came into the world as a baby needing care, to "two little people: Mary, just a young girl in a town no one had ever heard of, and Joseph, a carpenter," he said.

Scripture contrasts the strong and weak, rich and poor, sick and healthy. It holds up the elder son and the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, the woman who kissed Jesus' feet and Simon, his host. Yet, "Blessed are the poor. . . . There isn't any doubt about his message," said Durner.

The contrast of strength and weakness is carried on in Jesus' life, said the speaker. "He is easily put to death. His friends are little people who can't stop the trial."

Yet in his death he had victory "over death and darkness . . . over despair, depression and a lack of hope." When he was raised, he did not seek revenge or "wipe out the Roman army."

"He told us to love each other. . . . We haven't done a very good job of it," he said. "We live in a world where children are aborted, where people are lonely. We take the weak and put them in . . . warehouses. That's an awful word—warehouse—but it's an awful reality."

The weak are gotten out of the way "so that we can do what is important," yet "it is in loving that we become whole," he told the congregation.

"Who teaches us to be compassionate?" he asked. "Often it is the children . . . we learn to love in the face of weakness."

Durner told the congregation about Al, a man with a jail record—"No one could touch him"—who met Val at a drop-in. A woman with severe Cerebral Palsy, Val spelled out words on a finger board. As Al watched, "a big tear" came down each of his cheeks.

"Val in her weakness went right through that hard heart," Durner said. "When we go to the weak, we are transformed. This is a mystery. I don't know how it happens."

Durner talked about Stanford to show how Christ is seen in the weak. "Stanford was a holy man," he said. "He could teach me what it means to be lonely and rejected and live with that feeling, what it means to be thought of as a failure and not be crushed." In spite of it all, Stanford did "not hate or grow bitter."

The morning service saw 207 people gather. Eighty-seven people stayed for lunch and then gathered for a panel discussion on what it means to be a disabled person today.

George Durner spoke briefly again. He commended the Mennonite churches for all they have done, saying that in Winnipeg they have done more for disabled people than any denomination he has had contact with.

He said that our first and last few years are times of weakness and dependency. Between these "we have a moment of strength," yet we often use it selfishly and put away the weak.

Nettie Hildebrand talked about People First, an organization of mentally handicapped people. Katie Goetz told how she is at times thought to be drunk when she trips because of her limited vision.

Terry Smith, whose walk is affected by Cerebral Palsy, said he was encouraged by a similarly affected man to keep trying if he failed at something.

Henry Warkentin, panel moderator and Mennonite minister, told of how much his deaf daughter had taught him and his wife.

A film, "Disability Myth II: Employment," followed. It stressed how important work is, how disabled people can work, and explored ways in which this could happen.

This was the third year in a row that Handicap Concerns Manitoba had sponsored a major awareness event. It was the first time it had been held at Carman. The Carman church is a one-level, accessible, air-conditioned structure.

The Handicap Concerns Manitoba Committee attempts to help Mennonite churches in Manitoba understand ways in which disabled people can be better included in a faith community. *Terry Smith*

**Zilla Marshall,** Goshen (Ind.) College student from Jamaica, captured first place in the 1984 C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest with a presentation titled "Hunger." "We speak of world peace, but the struggle for peace among the poor is hopeless, for when hunger rules peace cannot prevail," Marshall said. June Funk, a student at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., received second place for her oration "Violent Games People Play." Funk condemned video games, noting that "these games almost all promote killing and violence in one way or another." Copies of the winning orations are available from MCC U.S. Peace Section.

**Indian Creek Homes, Inc.,** a non-profit corporation providing residential services to developmentally disabled individuals in the Bux-Mont, Pa., area since 1975, officially became a subsidiary of Indian Creek Foundation, Inc., on July 1. The foundation provides a variety of services through its two services. Indian Creek Industries provides placement and on-the-job training for mentally retarded adults. Indian Creek Congregational Services provides handicap awareness programs to area congregations.

**MIRA** means "look" or "watch" in Spanish. It is also the acronym for Mennonite International Refugee Assistance, an organization that literally "watches out" for Central American refugees in the Dallas area. Staffed by Mennonite Voluntary Service workers Brad and Sharon Ginter, MIRA helps those refugees to apply for permanent residence in Canada. MIRA tries to give refugees the guidance and support they need when they are caught between political crises and immigration law.

# Summer service worker combines basketball, Bible study

Harrisburg, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Cheering and shouting echo through an old firehouse in downtown Harrisburg, the site of a lively basketball game. The building has been renovated into Shamrock Christian Community Center with the help of the area Mennonite churches.

Here Brian Fountain coaches a group of 9- to 14-year-old energetic black youth in a fast-paced game against the local YMCA team. After the game, Fountain leads a Bible study for both teams where he talks about preparing to meet the Lord. "This is what Shamrock is here for," says Fountain. "We have our times of recreation and then we have our quiet times for spiritual emphasis."

Fountain is working at Shamrock as part of Mennonite Central Committee's Urban Community Development Summer Service Program. The program provides Christian community development opportunities for college-aged minority youth in their home communities. Fountain is working under the direction of Lawrence Chiles, program director at Shamrock.

"Shamrock tries to be a spiritual lighthouse for the community and meet the needs of the whole family," says Fountain, through such programs as arts and crafts, recreation, academic tutoring, personal and family counseling, Bible studies and summer camp.

*Brian Fountain (left) invites the YMCA basketball coach to bring his team to a Bible study following the game.*

The center has been open for four years. Fountain first became involved with Shamrock several years ago when Chiles encouraged him to take part in some activities.

Fountain feels positive about his experience this summer. "I've seen lives transformed. People from all walks of life no matter how old or young come to the center. They have needs—sometimes they just want to talk—and we try to help them. We do whatever the Lord has put in our hands to do," he says.

Both Fountain and Chiles sense acceptance from the community for their work at the center. People know what it stands for and respect the values it promotes. "People used to mistreat the building—throw things at it and use foul language—but now they see it as God's place. It is like a church without pews and a pulpit and people respect our work here," notes Fountain.

The bulk of Fountain's work is centered around youth. He counsels youth and works with the 4-H club that focuses on nutrition programs, arts and crafts, and special field trips.

Director Chiles describes one particularly meaningful encounter during the program this summer: "One week during midweek Bible study a young man who knew Brian when he wasn't a Christian raised his hand and asked, 'Brian, what really made the difference in your life? Is serving the Lord a reality for you or is this just a job for you?' For me to sit back and listen to Brian articulate his coming to faith in Christ was just a marvelous experience, not only for myself as director but for the young people we are working with here."

Mennonite and non-Mennonite churches in the Harrisburg district contribute financially to Shamrock's programs. Local youth groups visit the center to work with the youth and teach them such skills as cooking and meal planning.

They also present variety shows, slide shows and music and drama programs. One youth group from Slate Hill Mennonite Church in Shiremanstown, Pa., volunteered their time to fix up a kitchen.

Through the support of the Mennonite churches and dedication of people like Fountain and Chiles, Shamrock's programs can minister to the needs of the local community and be a witness for Christ. *Linda S. Sauder*


MEDA CONVENTION 84

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**Physicians for Social Reponsibility** is organizing a symposium entitled "Psycho-Social and Public Health Aspects of the Nuclear Arms Race." The symposium will be held Sept. 28-29 in Kansas City, Mo. To register or for more information, contact PSR, Greater Kansas City Chapter, Box 23055, Kansas City, MO 64141, (816) 931-1822.

**Yokefellow awards for 1983** have been presented to Daniel Byler of Nicaragua and Saleem Akhitar of Pakistan for their outstanding missionary work among the people of those countries. Byler, a Goshen (Ind.) College graduate, has served in Nicaragua since 1973 under the Rosedale Mennonite Mission Board. Each year the Direct Mission Aid Society of Minnesota awards monetary grants to missionaries in Third World countries who have made a significant contribution to the spiritual and physical needs of the people they serve. Nominations for the awards are solicited from individuals, churches and mission societies.

**In early 1983 major flooding** along the coast of Ecuador forced many poorer families from their makeshift houses along river beds. Bob and Myreya Miller, missionaries with Rosedale Mennonite Missions, surveyed the stricken area and were burdened by the need for a compassionate and tangible response. The city of Manta was especially hard-hit. The Millers initiated a reconstruction project there with money from RMM, Mennonite Central Committee, the Canadian International Development Agency and the European Mennonite Organization. Approximately a year later over 245 families are the proud owners of new homes.

# RECORD

## WORKERS

*Jerry and Judy Gingerich*, Rainbow Boulevard Church, Kansas City, Kan., have served almost three years of a four-year assignment with MCC. Jerry serves as MCC Appalachia program coordinator, and Judy works in adult education in Whitesburg, Ky. Jerry has a master's degree in social work from the University of Kansas in Lawrence, and Judy is working on a master's degree in special education there. Their parents are Abel L. and Sarah Gingerich of Arcola, Ill., and the late Lloyd and Thelma Noe.

*Kathy Good* has begun serving as office manager at MCC headquarters in Akron, Pa.

*Danny Graber* began as health membership manager at Mennonite Mutual Aid June 25.

*Jeffrey Gundy* has been appointed assistant professor of English at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

*Bruce Leichty* has resigned as management agent for Service Partners, Inc., of Lombard, Ill., and as editor of the Mennonite World Conference Newsletter, effective in August. He plans to enter law school at the University of California, Berkeley.

*Gregg Luginbuhl* has been appointed assistant professor of art at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

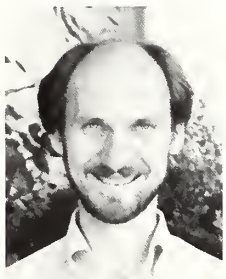
*Kevin Miller* has been appointed director of marketing for BroMenn Health Care, effective July 2.

*Peter* and *Margaret (Greti) Peters*, Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, will begin a three-year assignment with MCC in Calcutta, India, where they will serve as country representatives. For the past year they have served with the China Educational Exchange in Chongqing, China. Peter has a master's degree in education from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Greti has a bachelor's degree in education and English literature from the University of Winnipeg. Their parents are Peter and Katie Peters of Portage la Prairie, Man., and Catherine Klassen of Winnipeg.

*Peters*

*Wiens*

*Wolfe*



*F. Toews*

*M. Toews*

*Francis* and *Margaret Toews*, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., left July 6 for a three-year voluntary service assignment in India sponsored by the Commission on Overseas Mission and Woodstock School. Francis will teach instrumental music, and Margaret will teach intermediate math and give private flute lessons.

*Andreas Wiens*, Peace Church, Richmond, B.C., has begun a two-year voluntary service assignment with MCC as secretary/receptionist at the Victim Offender Ministries office in Winnipeg. She has a bachelor's degree in theology from CMBC and a bachelor's degree in religious studies from the University of Winnipeg. Her parents are Peter and Helen Wiens of Richmond.

*Sheralyn Wolfe*, Mount Royal Church, Saskatoon, has begun a 14-month voluntary service assignment with MCC in Akron, Pa., where she will be serving in day care. She has a certificate in early childhood education from the Kelsey Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences, Saskatoon. Her parents are Willard and Martha Wolfe of Saskatoon.

*Bill Wood*, Faith Church, Minneapolis, will begin a two-year MCC assignment in Minneapolis as program coordinator. His parents are George and Sophia Wood of Ruston, La.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# The impossible dream

*Calvin Redekop*

The year 1984 has been relatively peaceful although George Orwell promised us a society out of human control. But we are probably at one of the most crucial periods in human history. Of course people in other times were also confronting crucial times. One such person, Don Quixote, having read all he could on chivalry, determined he would "travel through the world with a horse and armor in search of adventures . . . redressing all manner of wrongs. . ." (p. 33, Penguin edition). One of the most unforgettable scenes is his attack on the windmills, which he imagined to be wicked giants and which he thought he could kill. The consequences would be honor to God and country and the "beginning of riches" (p. 34).

The international political situation in 1984 is a bit quixotic. We need not buy all the books on chivalry, as Quixote did, but we are bombarded incessantly with contemporary issues of chivalry ("rescuing the fair damsels in distress" reads saving underdeveloped countries from communism or keeping erring allies in the capitalistic camp). And we are being told we must be knighted so that we will be courageous and successful in battle.

Our situation is different from Quixote's in the options open to us to change the world. Whereas he felt he could get at the problem by repairing a rusted and outdated coat of armor and renaming his old nag, we are not as fortunate. A complex economic and political system intervenes (or interferes?) between us and the problems or adventures on the plain. Our political institutions are convinced that not only the old mail but the latest weapons of nuclear destruction are necessary to rescue the captain's maidens and rescue the poor.

To complicate the issue a bit more, our job is not to attack all the windmills but only some of them. In the United States there are two colonies of windmills, while in Canada there are three. All we need to do is decide which colony of windmills is the enemy and demolish it forthwith. Then the friendly and good windmills (even Christians?) will be the giants for the good. For years, even centuries, Christians have felt a holy urge to attack the giants so that righteousness would finally triumph and reign. And equally as long, people have been distressed to discover that the good windmills often turned out to be bad. I recall the disillusionment of the Vietnam years when we flaming young Quixotes hailed Lyndon Baines Johnson as the hero who would keep us from getting mired down in Asia. Our disillusionment soon turned into despair.

The impossible dream for modern Christian knights is to think that we merely need to throw the rascals out, put in some new clean ones, and we will have finally made the world safe for democracy (read, "our own lifestyles"). A valid and honorable dream, but maybe a mad one. Sancho called Quixote's dream "mad."

*"Working in the here and now is relevant but not ultimate. Political activity may be better than inactivity, but only relatively so."*

Several principles cannot be ignored by serious human beings regarding three political institutions:

1. Evil or good are not purely present in this set of windmills or those goatherds. Soviet communism, western democracy, South American nationalism and African dictatorships are mixtures of many things. Political parties, even Christian ones, are combinations of good and evil. Men and women are not personifications of good and evil. We can affirm some of the things most politicians stand for and do.

2. The principle of contagion suggests that opposites affect each other. Good has a way of being influenced by bad and vice versa. High resolve becomes corrupted as it meets evil head on. Bad intentions and motives become changed in contact with good ones. The holy purity of campaign promises become rusted lances very quickly. Remember Reagan's promise to reduce the federal deficit? Some of my true believer friends have done some remarkable shifting on that one. Remember Trudeau's promise to suffocate the nuclear arms race? Why is the term "campaign promises" cynically referred to as a euphemism for lies? A rational person will justifiably be skeptical about good intentions in politics. The principle of contagion says you become like the people you meet and consort with. Jesus had a harsher word for idealist politicians, "You who take the sword will become victims of it" (my translation of Matthew 26:52).

3. There is a third reason why "throwing the rascals out" is an impossible dream. Getting the Democrats or Conservatives into power will not bring the kingdom. And to confuse the contemporary for the eternal is confusing the lower for the higher. In no way am I implying that Christians should not be prophetic, critical, active participants (voting, marching, what have you) in the political process. Working in the here and now is relevant, but it is not ultimate. Political activity may be better than inactivity but only relatively so. Most utopians knew better than taking the political party route; they went about setting up their ideal communities, which also invariably failed.

The Bible is not a political science textbook, but it couches its message in a political context: oppressive Roman occupation, Jewish political polarities (Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots), etc. Jesus talks about wheat and tares, rain and sun, sinners, prostitutes as being a bit intertwined. Sinners go in before the Pharisees. Jesus calls his disciples to forsake all and follow him exclusively (Mark 8:34-36). Most of us have proved this is no easy task. Finally, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world . . . if it were, then my followers would go out and fight" (my translation of John 18:36).

Refurbishing our rusted coat of mail and jousting with the bad windmills is an impossible dream. In one parable Jesus talked about an owner who had a house with an evil spirit. The house was cleaned up (the rascals thrown out) only to have seven devils worse than the first take over the house. The millennium will not come when Mondale and Ferraro enter the White House nor when John Turner gets the western provinces into parliament. Sancho (the symbol of practical wisdom) told Quixote he was mad for attacking the windmills; they were not real enemies. Who are the real enemies? Where are the Sanchos to tell us?

*Calvin Redekop is professor of sociology at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, ON N2L 3G6.*

## Time for leadership

I agree that our churches are turned too inward (editorial, June 19 issue). At times it seems we'll do almost anything to keep things the way they are rather than strike out in new directions. Far too often I hear the words, "We have to do it the Mennonite way."

We need to remember that the early Anabaptist leaders struck out in a bold new direction to establish the heritage we look back on with such pride. If Menno Simons had conformed to pressure to keep things the way they were, where would our Mennonite faith be? If Peter and Paul had given in to pressure to fit into the Jewish religious system, where would the Christian faith be today? While I am glad that I'm a Mennonite, we must not let pride in our heritage lead us into becoming overly defensive about our heritage when we should be actively promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ. In some churches we teach Mennonite history during Sunday school. It makes me wonder, what do some Mennonites really worship?

I am also concerned that sometimes we get so involved with using conference materials that the Bible becomes only a secondary resource to be referred to when something the material says is unclear. The Bible should always be our prime source for studying in Sunday school, and we should use conference material as it fits our particular situation. The conference puts out much excellent material, but our guideline should always be its best use in our situation.

Mennonites have developed the committee system to a fine art that would boggle the minds of our finest parliamentarians. When a decision needs to be made we establish one or more committees, and when they don't seem to get the job done just right we establish more committees. We are getting so bogged down with committees that many creative initiatives get stifled because of the excessive amount of time it takes to reach a decision before any action is taken. I believe one of the reasons we are so hooked on the committee system is that we are afraid of giving any one person a strong leadership mandate. We would rather wallow in mediocrity and drift aimlessly along than give those people with God-given leadership abilities the necessary support and freedom to lead as God wants them to. While our leaders must be accountable to us, we must also give them enough room to be leaders. Where would we be if we hadn't had strong leaders like David Toews and Harold Bender?

It is time that some of us as individuals and some of our churches become alive through the power of God which we receive through the Holy Spirit. "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). *Werner Janzen, Box 879, Rosthern, SK SOK 3R0*

July 9

## Consumption and the market

The article "Playing the Market" in the July 17 issue presents a negative view of the stock market. It states that attempting to live above one's income seems to be a main motivation for "playing the market" and even goes so far as to tell us how Jesus would view the market. ("Jesus would probably say playing the stock market indicates that the priorities are fast bucks for self-indulgence—an expensive consumption disease.")

The author's criticism seems to be misplaced. People obtain money to invest in the stock market (or to invest in bank accounts or farmland or anything else) by *refraining* from consumption. It is difficult to see how a person who consumes his or her entire income and therefore has nothing to invest is morally superior to the person, assume with the same income, who saves some and invests it, for example, in shares of Steiger Tractor. Either person, of course, *might* be selfish and consumption-oriented, but the way to judge that, if we need to, is to see how that individual handles consumption—not whether that person chooses one investment alternative over another.

It is clear that the author, who says he has never invested, feels the stock market is a big casino. For some people it can be. However, buying stocks can be just as conservative as other forms of investment, if, in fact, one believes that conservatism in investment is a Christian virtue. Personally, I think that in most recent years fixed income securities and savings accounts have been riskier and more of a gamble in real terms than common stock, but that is just an opinion, not a value judgment. *L. Emil Kreider, 820 Milwaukee Road, Beloit, WI 53511*

July 28


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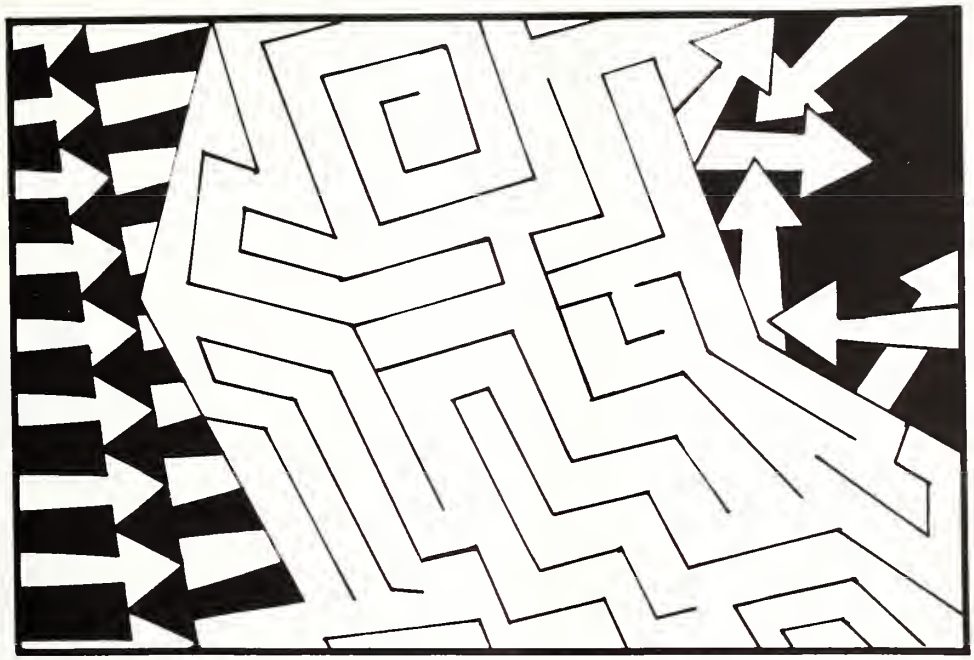
# Where are you going?

*Ted Larrison*

Adult Christian education has been undergoing many changes in recent years as the result of some congregations having decided that adults can study materials other than the Uniform Lesson Series. While preparing this article my wife and I quickly listed several of the classes we have participated in during the last few years. Our lists included topical classes ranging from Burial and Funeral Practices to Teaching Christian Faith to Children, discussion of books ranging from Gail Sheehy's *Passages* to Thomas Merton's *Contemplative Prayer*, several biblical studies as well as an intergenerational class that fits into no category clearly and can be best described as "an experience."

There have also been changes in the method and content of these classes. Some of the classes have been taught in a traditional lecture style while others have included a variety of formats from field trips to open discussion and from silent meditation to shared leadership. What is clear is that adult Christian education is going through some major changes which need to be examined carefully.



*If we don't care where our adult Christian education is going. . . then it hardly matters how we do it, and we will continue to wander in the maze of our wonderlands.*

Many reasons could be offered for these changes and all of them would be at least partially true. Instead of asking the question "Why are we experiencing changes in adult Christian education?" we might benefit more if we asked ourselves, "Why should we have adult Christian education?"

The way we answer this question will vary a great deal depending upon our basic orientation to life. Undoubtedly we can all find biblical support for our different answers. Our answers will all be different not because we read different Bibles but because we read the Bible differently. Our different perspectives on life (or, if you will, our different philosophies of life) determine what we consider factual. Our perspectives cause us not only to read differently but to think differently so that none of us can say absolutely that we have full knowledge or complete truth.

In the process of answering the why of adult Christian education we need to be examining our individual philosophies of life. It is through answering the question of the why of our own lives that we can begin to answer other questions such as the purpose of adult education programs. If we fail to examine our basic assumptions then there is really no need to look further.

When we are ready to address the why of adult Christian education we will need to examine several related questions: What is the purpose of adult Christian education? What is the end that we are working toward? Why should we have adult Christian education at all?

Having developed a clear understanding of our philosophy of life and adult Christian education, we then need to dialogue. At this point it will be a genuine dialogue of faith, but it will not come without risk. We will experience the risk of exposing our basic thoughts and beliefs to another's misunderstanding. We will also experience the risk of opening ourselves to the truth as another person experiences it and finding that our own assumptions are challenged and changed as a result.

The resulting dialogue within our congregations can only lead to chaos or community. We will either find that we cannot talk or listen to each other or that we are interested in knowing what another person thinks about the ultimate meanings of life and faith. If it leads to community, then the results will mean that we can join in a commonly held purpose which will make easier and clearer the answers we seek about the content and method of our adult Christian education programs.

A favorite passage of mine from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has Alice wandering through Wonderland when she sees the Cheshire Cat. "Cheshire Puss," she asks, "would you tell me, please, which way I ought to walk from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," says the cat.

"I don't much care where," says Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," says the Cat.

The message for us for adult Christian education is that if we don't care where we are going or why we have it, then it doesn't matter much what we do or how we do it, and we will continue to wander around in the maze of our wonderlands.

*Ted Larrison, Route 2, Box 245, Paoli, IN 47454, submitted the above article in response to some of the other articles he had read in* The Mennonite. *He is a member of the Paoli Mennonite Fellowship.*

# The Europeans and MWC

*Bill Yoder*

Mennonite World Conference executive secretary Paul Kraybill loves to portray world Mennonitism as a family and a global people. He fervently labels the administrative organization adopted at Wichita six years ago as "structures designed for mutuality." The General Council, which represents nearly all Mennonite conferences in the world, is described by him as "a series of equal partners."

Such phrases are utopian and must be understood as statements of intent. Europeans readily concede that all of us remain embedded in our own national cultures.

One of the first Mennonite conscientious objectors in Switzerland spent five months in prison in 1975. Much to the displeasure of most Swiss Mennonites, this person was then celebrated in the U.S. and Canadian church press for his courageous stand. Today he admits that these hurrahs from the wrong corner damaged the ultimate cause. According to him, many older Swiss Mennonites consider themselves on the receiving end of forced instruction administered by rabidly pacifistic Americans and Canadians with little comprehension of European reality.

Few Europeans present in Strasbourg expressed drastic complaints. A leading Dutch pastor did state privately that he saw no apparent reason why Carl Brüsewitz, the European vice president of MWC, should be "sacrificing his good name for a U.S. and Canadian cause." On the other hand, European participants did feel in general that their concerns and desires for shared responsibility were duly respected. Strasbourg truly was a celebration by and for the Northern Hemisphere. If anyone was left high and dry, it was the globe's southern half.

The quantity of minor irritations suffered by Europeans was hardly minute. Samuel Gerber, retired director of Bienenberg Bible School, could not understand why no major address was delivered by a citizen of the host country. Bruised French sensitivities were hardly avoidable: The hosting church numbers only 2,000 members and was in no way equipped in terms of expertise and experience to remain clear of the U.S. and Canadian steamroller.

But the issue was not one of insufficient work volume. German publisher Wolfgang Krauss stated, "We have unfortunately needed to do without our best and most committed people for the past two years."

A lay delegation of Mennonites from East Germany was able to attend MWC for the first time. Renate Roeser of East Berlin expressed her disappointment regarding the apparent dearth of knowledge on Eastern Europe. Many were visibly shocked when they noticed a name-tag reading "East Germany." Some recovered quickly enough to respond with instant and hurtful conclusions such as: "You must have sold yourselves to the state; otherwise you wouldn't be here."

Wolfgang Krauss added, "Many European Mennonites share the general criticisms Europeans harbor regarding Americans." These attitudes are reinforced by those North American Mennonites who behave in a fashion indistinguishable from that of other tourists. The spectacle of camera-wielding, foreign Mennonites scampering about the Weierhof in the Palatinate "is seen critically by many of us."

The finance department was undoubtedly grateful for the considerable inflow of cash stemming from tour groups roaring through all or portions of the MWC sessions on their way to or from the Alps. Of course, the tendency of those gung-ho on tourism to observe European Mennonites and mountains with equal distance and haste hampers mutual understanding.

The Colombian missionary Hugo Zorilla, who now resides in Spain, saw no reason why he should apologize for his broken English. He stated rather that "those of you who only speak English should be ashamed of yourselves." Many more anglicized Canadian and U.S. citizens need to wander off the tourist trail and attempt to engage their European sisters and brothers in meaningful dialogue. But that will only occur if many more can overcome their reputation as linguistic and intellectual lightweights.

*The banner "In Jesus Christ there is no East or West" tries to affirm the Mennonite family.*

The German "Umsiedler" from the Soviet Union are greatly unnerved by the multivaried character of world Mennonitism. The majority were present only for the special Umsiedler events on July 26. Those—primarily young people—who remained, experienced numerous surprises.

German peace activist Hans-Joachim

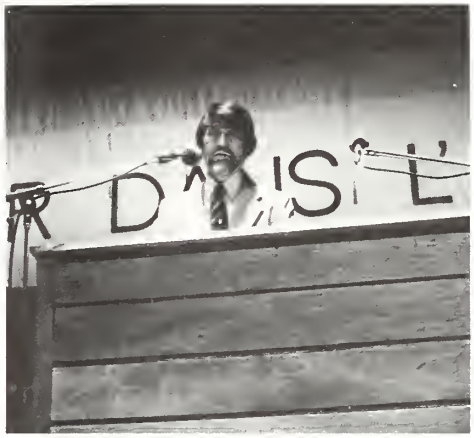
*"Significant improvements regarding . . . equality cannot occur overnight."*

Wienss reported that European Mennonites have tended to regard Mennonite Central Committee and Canadian/U.S. Mennonitism as identical. They have habitually transferred MCC's good name in Europe to its sponsoring congregations in America. Firsthand visits on the other side of the Atlantic have therefore led to unhappy conclusions. "Many in Canada and the United States applaud the peace witness," he said, "but they back off quickly as soon as anything beyond an oral commitment is demanded of them." Those people with a little education are often regarded as preferring to remain on the theoretical level. A Dutchman labeled this "the unwillingness of contemporary Mennonitism to allow Golgotha to become a part of its reality."

On the positive ledger, many Europeans in Strasbourg were uplifted by a new awareness of being plugged into a world movement. East German locomotive engineer Ronald Koch spoke for all East Europeans when he expressed gratitude to MWC "for having remembered us. Without an invitation from them, we would never have been allowed to come."

The peace activists among European Mennonites are grateful for the helpful impulses transmitted from America. One of the major contributors has been the "honorary Frenchman," John Howard Yoder.

The non-Mennonite European press bemoaned the lack of any closing resolution regarding the recent stationing of more U.S. missiles in Western Europe. Yet these same people were impressed by the cordiality and the lack of militant behavior so prevalent among peace activists at large-scale Lutheran and Catholic conferences in Western Europe. Perhaps Americans have something to demonstrate in terms of "disagreeing agreeably."



*Takio Tanase of Japan spoke of "God's People Witnessing." Some Europeans wondered why no feature presentation was made by a speaker from the host country.*

According to Wolfgang Krauss, most Europeans had adopted a wait-and-see attitude during the initial preparations for MWC XI. Only later did real interest begin to rise. Many were irritated by the high admission prices. But Hans Jakob Galle of Weierhof noted, "These complaints should not be taken too seriously. After all, European participation far exceeded all expectations."

Significant improvements regarding the matter of equality cannot occur overnight. As Helmut Doerksen of the Bienenberg Bible School noted, "The interests of the majority must also be respected." Despite all noble intentions, the church cannot jump over its own historical shadow. The ultimate fraternal utopia envisioned by the executive secretary will likely never be achieved. Yet the process of increasing partnership within the northern Atlantic realm may indeed have been injected with new life from the 11th Mennonite World Conference. *A Meetinghouse article*

*Bill Yoder, Gorkistrasse 127, 1000 Berlin-West 27, Federal Republic of Germany, works mostly with German radio but also does some work for the German church press.*

## Power within us

**I Can Make Peace** *(Alive Recordings, Mennonite Central Committee, 1983), lyrics and music by Jude Krehbiel and Doug Krehbiel, arrangements by Tom Harder*

*Reviewed by Carole Hull, 518 E. Fourth, Newton, KS 67114*

This is a time when each of us must assume responsibility for altering the course of history. In an increasingly tense world where a future for our children is dimmed by a potential computer error or by misled leaders and their gaggle of profiteers, where violence and hunger are the daily fare for our Third World sisters and brothers, and is a sign that the Bomb has already fallen for them, we find ourselves often on the precipice of despair. We are driven to our knees in a cold sweat, called back to the biblical promises of shalom and thrust into the presence of God through silence and contemplation. There empowerment begins. There we discover one of the answers: Peace must begin within our own hearts and in our own homes.

One of the tools to help adults and children is *I Can Make Peace.* This recording is a wonderful addition to family and church peace libraries. The composers/compilers succeed in pointing to the enormous power within each of us: that we have the power to create life or create death. The lesson emerges in a variety of cultural settings—American, African, English—in fantasy and real life, through young folks like Martin or seasoned peacemakers like Muriel Lester. It gives children a sense of their own power.

I tested the recording on three 10-year-olds who chuckled at the funny parts and understood the lessons but thought it was geared to children younger than themselves. This is a good beginning, a fitting tribute to 40 years of MCC Peace Section presence. It should be seen, however, as the first in a long series of materials following the precedent set by Cornelia Lehn in her books. Mennonites have 450 years of peace wisdom and theology to share at home and in wider circles. Are Mennos too quiet about their own products and should a greater effort be placed on promotion here and elsewhere?

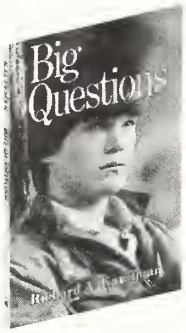
Peacemaking through storytelling and song is a proven and vital tool in altering our perceptions of one another. Just as 300-year-old hymns are sung today with reverence and awe and allow this generation to remember the long history of Anabaptist perseverance through persecution and exile, so too songs and stories such as these may be seen 300 years from now as instrumental to attitudinal changes and conversion of hearts.

## Essays on missions

**Exploring Church Growth** *by Wilbert R. Shenk (Eerdmans, 1983, 312 pages)*

*Reviewed by Erwin Rempel, executive secretary for Commission on Overseas Mission, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

"An extremely fresh and stimulating book on a familiar topic" is a well-articulated evaluation of this book by the editor of *Missiology*, Ralph R. Covel. The growth of the church is a vitally important subject for all of Christ's disciples. Editor Wilbert R. Shenk, vice president for overseas ministries of the Mennonite Board of Missions, has provided a rich collection of essays designed to continue the exploration of the premises, principles and goals of the phenomenon of church growth.




Acknowledging that the growth of the church cannot be reduced to accurate statistics and effective methods but is indeed a divine mystery, this book effectively opens up new lines of inquiry. Case studies illuminate the historical and experiential dimensions of church growth in Madagascar, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Taiwan and in other cross-cultural settings. Methodological issues involving the use of the social sciences, contextualization and wholistic approaches are examined in some detail. Finally, the foundational theological issues arising out of the biblically based missiology are probed in an assessment of our methodology as well as to provide an adequate basis for church growth.

Twenty-two chapters are authored by 21 recognized missiologists, including Harvie Conn, Al Krass, Orlando Costas, Paul Hiebert, David Bosch and John H. Yoder.

The book has been listed as one of the 15 most significant books of 1983 by the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, edited by Gerald Anderson. It is highly recommended to missionaries, mission administrators and students of world mission.

## What about . . .?

**Big Questions** *by Richard A. Kauffman (Herald Press, 1982, 72 pages)*

*Reviewed by Paula Diller Lehman, secretary for youth education for Commission on Education, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.*

The intent of Kauffman's book is to assist young people in thinking about some of the big questions of life. The author focuses on six difficult questions: Does belief in God make sense? Do miracles happen? Why is there evil and suffering? Does God have a plan for my life? Why am I tempted? and, How can I cope with personal failure? The questions are certainly appropriate for the given age level of the intended reader.

Kauffman does not intend to give "pat" answers to these questions. Rather, he blends logic, reason and experience into the process of thinking about these challenging questions. At times, the reader is asked to reshape certain questions. For example, instead of asking how a good and all-powerful God can allow evil to exist in the world, the Bible asks another question, "How does a good and all-powerful God confront evil in the world? How is God with people who must suffer?" Obviously, the book raises more questions than it answers. However, *Big Questions* is a useful tool for aiding students in the thought process.

*Big Questions* is easy to read. High school students will relate to the personal experiences and anecdotes from Kauffman. This book is practical and can be used for personal and youth group study. In the youth group setting, the format of the book focuses the questions and discussion which will aid the teacher. Also, there are excellent suggested readings at the end of each chapter. But often these readings are too difficult for teens, though adults may find them useful.

# MEDITATION

## Hymn 606 is special

My night had been restless. My husband was leaving in the morning for a conference in Indiana. I still had two shirts to iron, the packing needed to be finished and we had forgotten to pack the travel alarm. All night my mind had been going over these details. I was also worried. Would he be OK on the road? How would I get along at home with the children? It was all unsettling. Then I got my special message from God.

It started about two years ago when we purchased a digital alarm clock for our bedroom. It was a thrill one morning to awaken and see the time—6:06. Immediately my mind dashed to my favorite hymn in the *Mennonite Hymnal*, "Praise God from Whom" (#606). My day went exceptionally well. I had started it with a great hymn of praise.

A short time later I received my next special message. I had spent the night thinking about a certain problem. All night I had wrestled with the issue. Surely morning would soon come, I was tired of tossing and turning in bed. I opened my eyes and looked at the clock. Again it was 6:06. Immediately I felt better. My struggle of the night somehow seemed less significant. I knew things would work out.

The Sunday morning when we began a new Sunday school year, I awoke to my hymn at 6:06. Now I was ready to begin teaching with a song in my heart.

I have never set my alarm for 6:06 a.m. I usually awaken at 7 a.m., but time and time again on the morning of a big day or after a restless night I awaken with the peace and comfort of hymn #606 at 6:06 a.m.

This morning my message of peace came once again at 6:06. I knew that all would go well when my husband was gone. There was no need to worry. Instead I needed to "praise God from whom all blessings flow."

*Judy Schrag*

## In the lost and found

Two items in the lost and found column have made me ponder. One was in a Lincoln, Neb., paper: "Lost: seeing-eye dog, blonde, male." The other was in a Washington, Ill., paper: "Lost: a very large 2-year-old male cat, dark gray, walks in circles."

How much these two animals sometimes resemble Christians. In Psalms 115 and 135 the writer speaks of those "who have eyes and see not." Isaiah and Jeremiah speak of the same problem. We have eyes but often see things only on the surface. We see material things plainly, but how clearly do we see the spiritual meanings of the Scripture?

Sometimes I hear a mother or a business person say, "I just seem to be going in circles"—like the cat above. Going in circles does not get us anywhere. In Deuteronomy 2:3 God said to Moses, "You have circled this mountain long enough, now go north." Maybe we have circled the mountains of abortion and homosexuality long enough.

A Scottish theologian, Geddes Macgregor, says that "most Protestant congregations simply haven't a clue as to what they are all about." He writes, "It is not so much that we have forgotten what we stand for, it is rather that we have forgotten what we are." With a renewed awareness of what we are we will more fully comprehend our task.

*Ward W. Shelly*

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For Mennonites to assemble at Strasbourg for the XI Mennonite World Conference continues as age-old tradition. At least six major meetings of Anabaptist leaders took place in Strasbourg between 1554 and 1607. For a time it was known as the city of hope because of its tolerance toward religious dissenters. That era of tolerance did not last long, and one of our early leaders, Pilgram Marpeck, was asked to leave that city.

The theme for MWC XI, "God's People Serve in Hope," is a reminder of our past and a challenge for our present and future. We pray that this issue helps us reflect on the theme.


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# editorial

## A small step for Mennonites

About 460 years ago the first Anabaptists came to Strasbourg, France, because it was like one of the Old Testament cities of refuge. Here they had freedom to practice their faith. The early Anabaptist leader Pilgram Marpeck, a professional engineer, worked for the city and led the first Strasbourg congregation.

Strasbourg was a city of hope until the diversity attracted by this openness became too much for the religious and civil authorities. Marpeck was forced to leave the city in 1531. But at least six conferences of Anabaptist ministers met here between 1554 and 1607.

It seems appropriate that the 11th assembly of the Mennonite World Conference, July 24-29, brought about 7,000 Mennonites and Brethren in Christ back to Strasbourg. The MWC XI theme was "God's People Serve in Hope" (Servir Dans L'esperance).

Only God knows all the expectations that brought thousands of Mennonites from the world over to Strasbourg. But some people's hopes came into the open quickly. In the large group discussion following the first theme presentation (1 Peter 2:4-10) there were strong urges for specific practical examples of how to be God's people today. The speakers warned of modernism, materialism and ethnocentrism. But they didn't seem prepared to risk either personal confessions or prophetic prescriptions to illustrate the implications.

When Takio Tanase from Japan spoke of "God's People Witnessing" the next day, he urged Christians to show a goodness that is "noble or charming."

Gilberto Flores, a Guatemalan pastor, called Mennonite churches away from narcissism and triumphalism and into active discipleship that respects indigenous cultures.

The third day a presentation on "God's People Serving" (1 Peter 4:7-13) was given by Georgine Boiten-Du Rieu (Netherlands), Willi Wiedemann (Germany) and Elke Huebert (Germany).

The large group discussion expressed considerable frustration with the ethereal aspects of the first part and some said the challenges were a "paper tiger."

When Ron Sider, a Brethren in Christ author and professor at Eastern Baptist Seminary, Philadelphia, spoke Saturday of "God's People Reconciling" (1 Peter 3:8-12), he began with an illustration of meeting a Jewish agnostic student at a conference in Africa. He was there as a social activist who wanted to learn more about God's Son. But he was afraid of the Christianity which seems too heavenly oriented to be of earthly worth. Over the course of conversations and prayer that young man made a commitment to Jesus Christ as his Savior and the Lord of just relationships to all.

Sider, who is a high-profile evangelical social activist, then gave the most demanding call delivered at Strasbourg. He urged an end to isolationist pacifism, an incorporation of the total shalom in our congregational life and the initiation of a praying and caring nonviolent peacekeeping force of 100,000 people (beginning with Mennonites but including any believers ready to serve in this way) ready to mediate and prepared to die in the "hot spots" of today's world. Sider called for the peace churches to spend $25 million for this purpose over the next three years.

While the large discussion group seemed to agree in principle with Sider that the next two decades may become the most violent ones in human history and that they may provide a unique Mennonite rendezvous with history, not many seemed ready to take the way of Golgotha expounded in his sermon.

To me it was significant that applauses during speeches often came at statements of a missiological-devotional nature. Rarely did one break out upon a call to activism. And the greatest ovations came upon the spirited singing by the Diamond Street Mennonite Church Choir of Philadelphia, a largely black congregation.

No special statement or pledge emerged from the larger assembly. Too many flags called people to their own agendas. Somehow our Christ is not yet large enough to bring us together much beyond some inspirational fellowship.

This is not a lament. It is an accomplishment of God's Spirit that Mennonites today speak over 100 languages and dialects and come from 143 groups. A flame that flickered weakly after the severe persecutions of our early history is burning more brightly.

We have not yet arrived but we are pilgrims en route. Another small Mennonite step was taken at Strasbourg. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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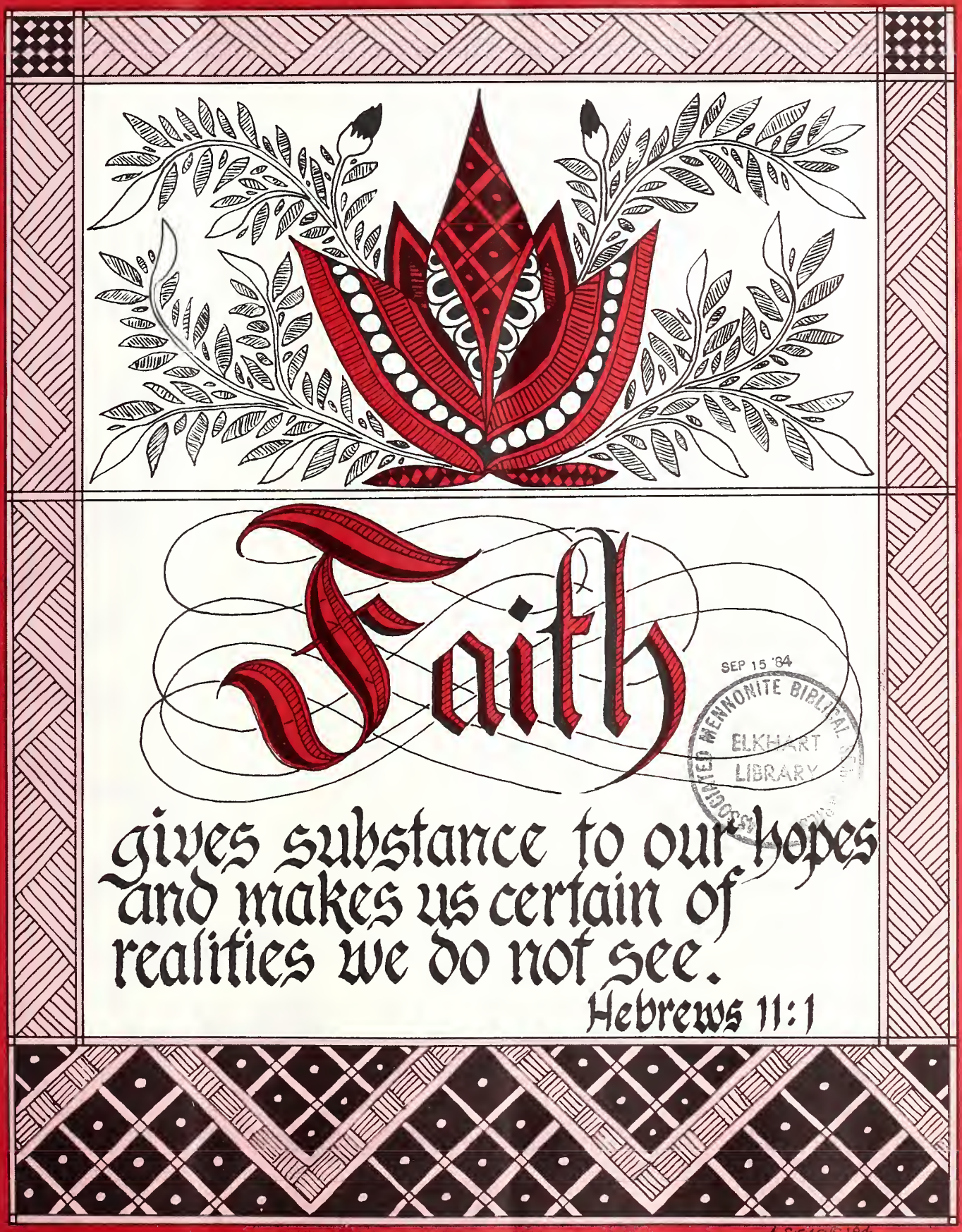


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# Faith or delusion: my response

*John Toews*

As a teacher of psychiatry I am often asked by students why the religious beliefs of people are not classified as delusional. These questions often come from students who have seen patients with religious delusions and who themselves have decided not to believe in any religion.

I have usually replied with the standard definition of delusion—a fixed, false belief out of keeping with or not shared by those of one's educational, social, cultural or religious background. If the beliefs are shared by others of like background, by definition they are not delusional. While this is a technically correct response, my answer in no way approaches what I have learned about faith and delusions both as a psychiatrist and a serious participant in the Christian religion.

The question posed requires a discussion of the similarities and the differences between religious belief and delusional belief. Such discussion should focus on the delusional person's search for meaning—just as I search for meaning in my life—and it should deal with how I can know that my faith is not just a participation in a massive delusional system. The following is my more detailed reply.

**A psychiatrist and a Christian.** I approach this question as a psychiatrist; that is my profession and the framework within which I view clinical phenomena. However, I also address the question as one who does participate in a religion. I am a believer in Christ, and the Christian faith provides the frame of reference for my life. It outlines and interprets my thoughts, perceptions and actions. I cannot comment on all the other religions. While generalization of my observations may be possible, my experience is with Christianity and so I will answer the question from that perspective alone. "How can I as a Christian be certain that I am not participating in a delusional system?"

The Christian frame of reference never has a total influence. I see and interpret my observations in other spheres as well (e.g. in the purely psychological sphere or in the medical sphere), but when I pass beyond those spheres I reach the bedrock of my existence—my faith in Christ, "in whom I live and move and have my being." So I am not a dispassionate participant in the important question posed.

**Delusions.** Why don't we consider participation in Christianity delusional? Delusions have several dimensions. The psychiatric definition is as stated above, and delusions are often accompanied by other signs and symptoms of severe mental illness. Lay people often use delusion to mean a false belief that appears preposterous to the next person. Since both definitions of delusion may underlie the students' question, I will respond to both.

The delusions dealt with by psychiatry have arisen as a result of mental ill-

ness. The perception and thought processes of the afflicted individuals have been distorted by the disease process. As a result, preposterous ideas come to mind that hold the ring of truth for the patients as these ideas seem to be an explanation for what they feel is happening in their environment. Once the delusional people have fixed on delusional ideas, these ideas tend to frame and interpret many of the observations that previously have been puzzling or possibly even inconsequential.

For example, a blue car passing one's house may now be interpreted as a message from God that the patient is being selected for a special purpose (like saving the world from destruction) rather than being interpreted simply as a blue car passing on the street. These thoughts occur in isolation and when shared with others seem ridiculous to those who hear them.

Right here are some major differences between my Christian beliefs and what occurs in the formation of delusions. First, the delusional thoughts occur in isolation while there is a real sharing of my interpretations of Christian faith with other people within the church (and sometimes without) just as I am doing now. My Christian beliefs are not private, they are shared within a community of Christians and with millions of Christians throughout the world. My experience of my relationship with Christ is not private either. It is personal—intensely so—but it is also shared.

Delusional people's thoughts make sense only to themselves. My interpretation of the faith can be affirmed by others and is open to their examination, modification and correction. It protects me from becoming too ingrown and too subject to my private interpretations of what I perceive to be the reality of my faith. This process is lacking in delusional people.

My Christian beliefs are possibly as firmly held as the beliefs of the delusional people. However, I can step outside them to examine them from another perspective and to appreciate that others may see it differently. Usually delusional people are so overwhelmed by the reality of their delusional thought that it is almost impossible for them to take a different perspective even temporarily.

There is also a parallel between delusional people and myself. This parallel is in assuming a frame of reference that others may consider silly. Delusional people assume a frame of reference (false as it is) to give coherence to many observations that otherwise would not make sense. I choose a frame of reference that gives meaning to my basic questions concerning existence, good and evil, relationships to others and to the belief in the spiritual reality that transcends my understanding.

*Delusional thoughts occur in isolation while there is a real sharing of my interpretations of Christian faith with other believers in the church (and sometimes without) as I am doing here. Faith is a network with many connections and junctions.*

It is not only participants in a religion like Christianity and the delusional people who assume these organizing frames of reference. We all frame our observations with an organizing viewpoint, whether it be scientific, humanistic, psychological or whatever. However, my Christian frame of reference allows me to be open to interpret differently, through different eyes, that which I see around me, much as the delusional people who, because of their orientation, interpret meaning to blue cars. I interpret meaning to what others may disregard or call chance. I was on the bus one day when an obese, unkempt man sat next to me in a space that was too small for his size. I felt a flash of anger as I yanked my coat from under him. While others may have interpreted this as an inconsequential, minor irritant to be forgotten lest it clutter the mind with useless trivia, it caused me to examine my right to think that I was entitled to that seat and how I could have responded with selfish anger to someone God loves as much as he does me and who had unknowingly sat on my coat. The students may interpret this as overreacting or making a mountain from a molehill. For me it is a significant comment on my own sinfulness and the struggle between good and evil in my own life. It is qualitatively different from a delusional interpretation of an event but it does point out how the inconsequential can suddenly take on meaning much beyond the significance ordinarily attached to it. In this, we and the delusional people participate in the same process.

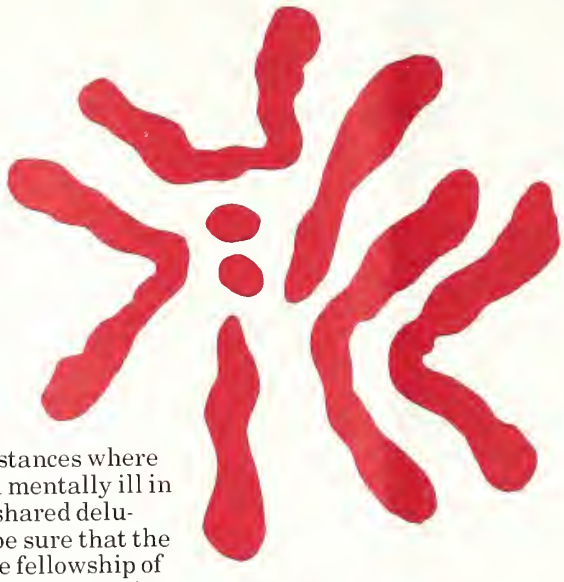
**Christianity and mental health.** I think the students may now concede that possibly my Christian faith is not delusional in a clinical sense. However, they might be puzzled that so many mentally ill people have delusions about God, sin and special powers from God. I agree that many of the mentally ill become delusional about religious matters. This should not be surprising. If the reasoning powers of the mind are affected by a disease and if the environment is becoming changed as a result of an individual's distorted perceptions and possibly hallucinations, it is natural to reach beyond oneself for explanations. As a result of the illness, the explanations themselves will seem farfetched. We all have a drive to make sense of our environment and of our existence. What more natural source is there in which to seek explantions for the disturbing events surrounding a mental illness and the basic questions about meaning than in beliefs about God and God's relationship to oneself? The ideas may seem disturbed to others only because they arise out of an illness that affects the ability to express coherently what is happening in ways that may be shared with others. The process is a natural and normal one.

This process occurs in many of us, whether we are particularly religious or not. A response to serious illness or to the approach of death is to reach for God for the explanation. Bargaining with God, even by unbelievers, has been listed as a stage in the preparation for death by Kübler-Ross in her book *On Death and Dying*.

We Christians try to reach beyond ourselves to God to provide explanations to the basic existential questions of life. We feel there is Somebody who transcends the world of natural observation, science and strictly biological interpretation of life. By accepting God as Creator, Lover and Redeemer of humankind, everything is seen differently. Accepting a frame of reference within which we orient ourselves and interpret our experiences and thoughts is a natural process applying to all religions, science, history and any other system that provides a frame for thoughts and observation. The reaching to God as this frame of reference is one example of this natural process. We are sharing in a process similar to the religiously delusional people, but we reach different results.

My students may still say I am talking about sick or deranged minds as I speak

*When the reasoning powers of people are affected by disease and their environment keeps changing due to distorted perceptions and even hallucinations, it is natural to reach beyond oneself for explanations.*



of delusions. There are instances where people may not have been mentally ill in a clinical sense but have shared delusional beliefs. How can I be sure that the sharing of faith within the fellowship of other believers protects me from participating in delusions? Delusions can be shared.

We know clinically about "folie au deux" where two people (and maybe more) can share a delusion together. And what about Jonestown (other examples would do as well), where a strong charismatic leader could so take over the wills and lives of people that he could lead them willingly to a horrible and useless death? Were not these people delusional?

While these people were not, strictly speaking, mentally ill, they were participating in an incredible, destructive delusion. Yes, the mixture of religious beliefs—even Christian beliefs—with evil and deluded forces can cause untold damage in the name of religion. We need not stop at Jonestown. What of the religious wars, the Crusades and the Inquisition?

**Aberrations can be avoided.** Reality testing is one way people constantly check out their own perceptions and thoughts against what they know to be reality. For most of us it works quite well. For example, we may feel that someone in a crowd has looked at us in a special way. We quickly reason that we don't know the person, he or she was likely not looking at us in any particular way and if they were it may have to do with our reminding them of someone or something. We use deduction from the particular experience to what we know normally happens to verify our perceptions. Delusional people have a failure in this process of reality testing and are unable to check things out against reality.

Christians also engage in reality testing. We verify the components of our faith and our Christian experience. The first order of protection is the sharing of the faith within the whole Christian community. I emphasize the *whole* because if any group becomes too isolated it is in danger of feeding on its own theories without ever opening them to outside scrutiny. This is dangerous. In the sharing of our faith we reality test our faith with our Christian contemporaries. In it we are open to modification and correction.

It is possible for a religion to evolve with time and bear little resemblance to its origins. This is particularly so if one views a religion strictly as the product of a given culture and subject to the same influences toward change as any other aspect in the culture. Therefore Christians recognize the need for a second order of reality testing. In our process of sharing, the time span must be more than just the present. It must include the past and planning for the future.

If a group isolates itself in time, cutting ties with those who have preceded, there is no way of really squaring their interpretations with the wisdom of the ages. This is particularly important for me as a Christian. The people with whom the central elements of my faith must square are not just the members of my particular congregation, my conference or my denomination. It must include the faith of the believers that have preceded me through the ages. It must take me back to those who knew Christ and to a knowledge of Christ himself (the New Testament) and to the antecedents of Christ in the Old Testament. It must lead me back through all these people to God at the beginning of time. My current relationship with Christ, God and his church must fit the message that reaches me across the ages through "that great crowd of witnesses" (Hebrews 12).

This look backward allows me to view the future with faith . . . "to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see" (Hebrews 11:1 *TEV*). It provides both a past and future time in the relationship of people to God.

The protection against the narrow distortion of the Christian faith into a shared delusional system rests in not relinquishing our thoughts and wills to any but Christ, in sharing with others of the faith as widely as possible and in maintaining the continuity of the faith through time.

One of the difficulties my students face is that they look at religion from the outside. I can't speak for other religions because I don't know them. But, while much can be known about Christianity from the outside, it cannot be fully known by a creed, a statement of belief or prescribed rituals. It can only be fully known and appreciated in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And the only way this relationship can be experienced is by choosing it as an act of faith, by abandoning the strictly rational and taking a "leap of faith." To my students this act may border on the irrationality of the delusional. To me it is not irrational. It is an act, a view of life that transcends the rational and, once undertaken, contains built-in tests of authenticity and reality.

Belief in Christianity is not delusional. The quest of delusional people to explain or understand their own experiences of life is one with which we can identify. However, as Christians we go beyond the shadow world of delusions into the light of God. There is profound truth beyond rationalism, but it can only be known by participation in the act of faith. •

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*Both apples and arks call us to engage in lifelong learning.*

# The apple and the ark

*Tom Kauffman*

In the decade of the '80s, *The Mennonite* has begun to carry articles advocating an emphasis on lifelong learning. Since Mennonites are known, among other things, as a "people of the Book," I pose the following question: Are there biblical affirmations for adults continuing to learn? To open conversation on this question I offer the following two biblical images from the book of Genesis.

In Genesis 2-3 is the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They are apparently thriving in obedience to God until a serpent entices them to eat from the fruit of "the tree in the middle of the garden" (3:3 *NEB*).

The fruit, sometimes referred to as an apple, was located on a tree in the middle of the garden. The location of the tree is significant. Could it be the tree was located in the center of the garden so that Adam and Eve would not easily avoid it? Perhaps it confronted them daily in their comings and goings through the garden. If the tree's location had been on the periphery of the garden they could have only occasionally encountered its pleasing fruit. But because of its location they were constantly aware of and confronted by its presence.

The serpent encouraged them to make a decision about its fruit. Was what God said about the apple correct, or was what a creature suggested true? Adam and Eve were presented with a choice.

I do not believe God placed the tree in the middle of the garden for the sole purpose of making life more difficult for Adam and Eve. Rather, by means of the story in Genesis 2-3, God is telling us that decision making is a central part of our lives. At the center of our garden of existence is the responsibility to decide, to make choices.

If this is indeed true, then we need to become faithful decision makers. At the center of our existence, every day of our life, we must make decisions. And one of the ways of proceeding is to engage in a lifelong process of learning what it means to be faithful decision makers. Adult education, with an emphasis on the adult environment and experience, can contribute to this process.

The second affirmation comes from Genesis 6-9. In this account of life upon earth we read of much chaos and evil (6:5). God decided upon a sweeping change, one that would affect the whole created order. The situation called for a change which would destroy all save Noah, his family and representatives of the other living beings. How would this be accomplished?

One of the ways would have been for Noah and the rest to journey to some safe place, isolated from the chaotic destruction of the flood. They might have climbed a high mountain and been instructed to build waterproof walls to protect them from the flood. Instead God called Noah to build an ark, not so that they would remain unaffected by the change, but so that they might cope with and survive the destructive change. (I do not believe we can conclude that all change is destructive on the basis of this passage. But that discussion is beyond the scope of this article.)

In this passage the Bible appears to affirm the centrality of *dealing with* change in our lives rather than *avoiding* it. By affirming this, could it be that God is preparing us for the continued presence of change in his created order? Could it be God's way of saying, "The flood tides of change are always going to be a part of human existence, but I will provide you ways of coping with that change"? God certainly demonstrates that providing the wherewithal to cope with change is part of his task. Again it seems that adult education can be an extremely useful tool in equipping God's people with coping skills.

These two passages, coming early in the Bible, suggest they are fundamental to any understanding we have about ourselves as God's creatures. A central part of life involves decision making—making choices about apples. And an ever-present challenge faces us in responding to change—utilizing our arks.

Both apples and arks call us to engage in lifelong learning. As Christians we desire to make more faithful decisions and to respond creatively and faithfully to change. To do so means continually listening to God and the Christian community (and learning from each). We are not simply to rely on words we learned years ago, but rather to build upon those words with lifelong wisdom.

I would like to affirm the suggested emphasis on adult education among Mennonites. In doing so I offer these two images, of apples and arks, as possibilities in building a biblical support for lifelong learning.

*Tom Kauffman, Route 2, Box 12A, Paoli, IN 47454, is a member of the Paoli Mennonite Fellowship and studied adult education at Indiana University.*

# A voice in Ramah

*Mel. D Friesen*

O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth! Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouths of babes and infants, thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. When I look at the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him (Psalm 8:1-4).

> Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouths of babes and infants (Psalm 8:1bf).

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. But I keep faith with thousands, with those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5 f).

> Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives. . . . "When you are attending the Hebrew women in childbirth," he told them, "watch as the child is delivered and if it is a boy, kill him; and if it is a girl, let her live" (Exodus 1:15f).

When Herod saw how the wise men had tricked him he fell into a (rage) passion, and gave orders for the massacre of all children in Bethlehem and its neighborhood, of the age of two years or less. . . . So the words spoken through the prophet Jeremiah were fulfilled: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud laments; it was Rachel weeping for her children and refusing all consolation because they were no more" (Matthew 2:16f).

> No more, no more, no more.
> I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:6).

(So when Joseph was still) in the distance and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him. They said to each other, "Here comes that dreamer (of dreams). Now is our chance; let us kill him and throw him into one of these pits and say that a wild beast has devoured him. Then we shall see what will become of his dreams" (Genesis 37:18f).

Abraham rose early in the morning, took some food and a skin full of water and gave it to Hagar; he set the child on her shoulder and sent her away, and she wandered into the wilderness of Beersheba. When the water in the skin was finished, she thrust the child under a bush and went and sat some way off . . . for she said, "How can I watch the child die?" So she sat some way off and wept bitterly (Genesis 21:14f).

> After this, knowing that all was now finished, he said, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

Abraham, Abraham. . . .
Here am I.
Take Isaac your only son whom you love and go to Moriah. There you shall offer him as a sacrifice on one of the hills which I will show you. So Abraham went. He placed the wood for the sacrifice and laid it on Isaac's shoulders. . . (Genesis 22:1f).

> And he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place of the skull which in Hebrew is called Golgotha (John 19:17).

My mind is distraught, my days are numbered, and the grave is waiting for me. Wherever I turn, men taunt me and my day is darkened by sneers. . . . My days die away like an echo; my heart strings are snapped. Day is turning into night and morning light is darkened before me. Where then will my hope be! (Job 17:1f, 17f).

> I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me. But I keep

*When we see a young, innocent child in the midst of God's beautiful creation, the possibility of child abuse seems remote. But it has become one of the screaming issues in many communities. How can we as churches respond?*

faith with those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5f).

The land is scorched by the fury of the Lord of Hosts and the people have become fuel for the fire. On the right one man eats his fill but yet is hungry; on the left another devours but is not satisfied; each feeds on his own children's flesh and neither spares his own brother (Isaiah 9:19f).

I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:5).

What is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man (children of men) that thou dost care? (Psalm 8:4).

Fathers, do not provoke you children to anger. Chastise your child while there is hope; but be careful not to flog him to death (Ephesians 6:4; Proverbs 19:18).

I punish the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:5).

A man's (parent's) ill temper brings its own punishment (Proverbs 19:19).

I punish the children for the sins of the fathers (Exodus 20:5).

Listen to advice and accept instruction and you will die wise (Proverbs 19:20).

But I keep faith with thousands, with those who keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5).

He who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes. I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his sake (1 John 2:11f).

Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me. . ." (Isaiah 49:14).

My Lord, my Lord, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46).

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget (Isaiah 49:14f).

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die (to die, to die. . .) (Ecclesiastes 3:1f).

Perish the day when I was born and the night that said, "A child is conceived." May that day turn to darkness; may God above not look for it, nor light of dawn shine on it. Let gloom and deep darkness claim it, let clouds dwell upon it; let blackness of the day terrify it. Blind darkness swallow up that night. Count it not among the days of the year, nor reckon it in the cycle of months. That night may it be barren forever. . . . Why was I not stillborn? Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire? (Job 3:1f).

What father among you will offer his son a snake if he asks for a fish, or a scorpion when he asks for an egg? (Luke 11:11f).

I punish the children for the sins of the fathers, to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me (Exodus 20:5).

A man's (child's) spirit may sustain him in sickness, but if the spirit is wounded who can mend it? (Proverbs 18:14).

To everything there is a time and a purpose under heaven, a time to keep silent and a time to speak (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

In a lawsuit the first speaker seems right until another steps forward and cross-examines him (Proverbs 18:17).

You shall not be led into wrongdoing by the majority nor when you give evidence in a lawsuit shall you side with the majority to pervert justice; nor shall you favor the poor man in his suit (Exodus 23:2-3).

A curse upon him who withholds justice from the orphan and the widow.

You shall not be led into wrongdoing by the majority (Exodus 23:2).

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined (Isaiah 9:2).

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulders. . . . Round his waist he shall wear the belt of justice and good faith shall be the girdle round his body. Then shall the wolf lie down with the sheep and the leopard lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall grow up together, and a little child shall lead them (Isaiah 9:6, 11:5f).

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God . . . who keeps faith with thousands, with those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5).

Suffer the little children to come unto me and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look kindly upon you and give you peace (Matthew 19:14; Numbers 6:24).

I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God . . . who keeps faith with thousands, with those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5).

Oh Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth! Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouths of babes and infants. . . .

Whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouths of babes and infants.

When I look at the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the (children of men) that thou dost care for (them)?

Thou hast made them little less than the angels, thou dost honor them with glory.

Glory which is chanted by the mouths of babes and infants.

OH LORD, OUR LORD, HOW MAJESTIC IS THY NAME IN ALL THE EARTH, AMEN (Psalm 8:1-5).

*Except you become like a child, you shall not see the kingdom of God.*

*Mel D. Friesen, pastor of the Bethel Church, 2401 Willow, Pekin, IL 61554, put together the above passages as a biblical commentary on the growing problem of child abuse in our midst. Quotations are from the KJV, RSV and the Jerusalem Bible.*

# Mennonites and investments

*Robert V. Peters*

In a 1972 article in *The Mennonite* Lois Barrett examined how Mennonites were benefiting from and helping to support the war in Vietnam through their investments. Now 12 years later it is once again time to look at how Mennonites are investing their money. Has anything changed since 1972? Do we have clear guidelines for our investments in the 1980s? Are they being enforced?

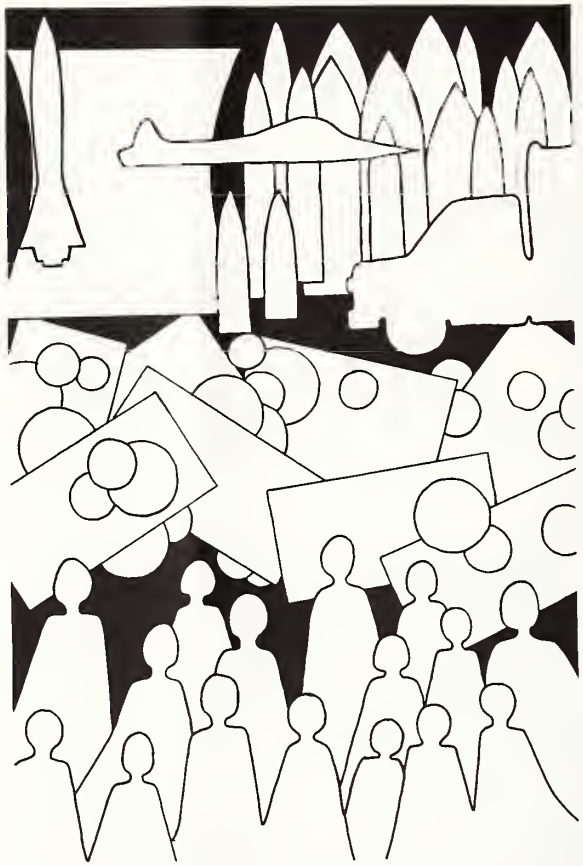
One of the largest Mennonite investors is Mennonite Mutual Aid. In 1971 it adopted its first guidelines for investment which stated in part, "Investments will avoid companies on the Department of Defense list of the top 50 largest defense contractors and companies with 5 percent or more of their gross sales in defense contracts."

Barrett found that despite these guidelines MMA held stock in General Telephone and Electric and invested in U.S. treasury bills and bonds. Both investments were benefiting from and supporting the war in Vietnam.

Recently MMA expanded guidelines on investments by adding, "MMA attempts to avoid investments in any company with any direct involvement with weapons or armaments." MMA officials were unable to clarify for me what exactly the policy is. Is it no investments in companies on the top 50 list of defense contractors? No investments in companies with 5 percent or more of their gross sales in defense contracts? Or what?

According to my research, MMA is not investing in the top 50 or in companies with more than 5 percent of their gross sales in defense. However, it does have investments in companies with direct involvement in weapons or armaments, such as Getty Oil (59 on the top 100 list of Pentagon contractors), Sun Oil (71), and Xerox (95). Thus MMA is currently not totally living up to its investment guidelines, although it seems to have improved.

MMA officials explained that an independent committee helps to monitor MMA's investments. Yet in discussions with top MMA leaders I noted that MMA does not work with the leading church group working on investments—the Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility, an arm of the National Council of Churches. ICCR staff noted that are unaware of any effort by Mennonite shareholders like MMA to use their stock to vote in support of shareholder resolutions (often sponsored by church groups) to end corporate involvement in armaments and support for Third World dictatorships.



*The relationships between our discipleship commitments, the money we invest and how it influences people, is surely complex. But Christians cannot avoid a calling to global evangelism with justice for all people.*

In its new guidelines, MMA also has a section stating, "MMA will invest in companies which promote a better quality of life." ICCR staff noted that MMA supports and benefits from dictatorships in countries like South Africa, El Salvador, Korea, Chile, Guatemala and the Philippines through investments in companies like Amex, Bank America, United States Steel, First Chicago, Weyerhauser, Xerox, Wells Fargo, Ford, General Motors and American Home Products.

MMA also has several investments in utilities like Commonwealth Edison and Philadelphia Electric who run nuclear power plants which provide radioactive materials for nuclear weapons, expose millions to the dangers of low-level radiation and leave future generations with the problem of cleaning up radioactive wastes.

In 1972 Lois Barrett also examined the investments of the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund, which provides coverage for General Conference workers and other Mennonite ministers and church workers. Barrett reported that in spite of a stated policy that "PMF will invest only in those industries that we believe to be in the best interests of the church and society . . ." in 1971 PMF had $6 million invested in companies in the top 100 defense contractors and $4 million invested in U.S. treasury securities.

In a recent letter PMF president Robert Lamont stated, "PMF is still concerned about socially responsible investments and . . . will not knowingly invest in companies primarily in the business of munitions-military weaponry-liquor-tobacco-gambling."

PMF now has 40 percent ($24 million) of its investments in major defense contractors, up from 14 percent in 1971-2. It

has also increased its investments in government bonds.

PMF has stock in 14 of the top 100 defense contractors, namely General Electric (4), Exxon (14), IBM (23)—a leader in developing communication satellites like NAVSTAR, which will target weapons, Standard Oil (19)—producing a new generation of biological weapons, TENNECO (15)—builder of the Trident submarine, AT&T (24), General Motors (27), Teledyne (32)—producers of the Pershing II and cruise missiles, AVCO (37)—makers of the MX missile, Atlantic Richfield (35), Amerada Hess (42), General Tire and Rubber (54), Motorola (72) and Gulf Oil (93).

PMF also supports militarism through investments in Monsanto, Union Carbide, ALCO, Con Edison and Philadelphia Electric, companies involved in uranium mining, nuclear power, weapons design and testing, etc.

*The walk of financial accountability requires a partnership of concerned and discerning believers.*

Like MMA's the PMF investments also undergird various Third World regimes. These investments serve to justify current U.S. foreign policy, which assumes a divine right to intervene when U.S. interests are threatened. Through these investments people profit from the exploitation of the poor, who are crushed beneath the structural violence generated by large multinational corporations who de facto run local economies through various puppet dictatorships controlled by U.S. interests.

Tim Smith, director of the ICCR, notes that the criteria for investments used by PMF are considerably weaker than those used by MMA. He also told me that ICCR has had difficulty in getting PMF to work with ICCR in discussing how to invest and how to use investments to support progressive shareholder resolutions to end exploitation. Smith noted the irony that while PMF has considerable investments in weapons makers and dictatorships, the national United Presbyterian Church has condemned such investments along with most of the major Protestant churches, many served by PMF.

Undoubtedly it is difficult to invest morally in our complex economic climate. Since much violence is created through the policies of corporations, it is imperative that we examine how our church is investing its resources. It is also important that we look at how we invest. Our resources and investments must be used for the kingdom of God, not for the promotion of Caesar's interests. Faithfulness may even mean sustaining financial losses and giving up on the certain profits of investing in companies which export death. Our conscientious objection to war must extend to our refusal to support the economic structures which are crushing brothers and sisters here and overseas.

*Robert V. Peters, 7210 Meade St., Pittsburgh, PA 15208, is a free-lance writer, a peace activist and a graduate student.*

# MMA responds to Robert

*Kent Stucky*

I welcome the concern and counsel to MMA and each of us. We recognize that attempts to be faithful in economic decisions may be interpreted differently by each of us.

You and I have been in conversation since August 1983. In my letter of Aug. 16, 1983, I stated that "if you have counsel for us, please communicate it to me directly so that I might receive your concerns as coming from a Christian brother who wishes to walk with us in this area of our lives." That type of relationship continues to be my wish.

In November you allowed me to review an early draft of your article. My letter of Nov. 16 suggested a number of corrections of inaccurate information. In the final revision you incorporated some but ignored others.

An explanation about MMA's Investment Guideline IIA, entitled "Peace," might be helpful. (1) MMA attempts to hold no investments in companies on the most recent list of the Department of Defense's 50 largest contractors. (2) MMA attempts to not invest in companies with 5 percent or more of their gross sales in defense contracts. (3) MMA attempts to avoid investments in any company with any direct involvement with weapons or armaments.

For MMA to invest in a company, that company must meet all of the three criteria. Getty Oil, Sun Oil and Xerox are not involved with weapons or armaments to our knowledge. They sell gasoline and photocopiers. To our knowledge Commonwealth Edison and Philadelphia Electric do not manufacture nuclear weapons. They also do not provide radioactive materials for nuclear weapons. MMA has no investments in General Motors or Ford because of their defense contracts. MMA does have investments in credit subsidiaries that are not involved in defense contracts.

The issue of investing in companies that are in countries with dictatorships is difficult. There have been clear cases of exploitation by certain companies; however, the presence of a company in a country with dictatorial rule does not necessarily imply exploitation.

MMA no longer purchases the services of the National Council of Churches' Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility. Rather we monitor investments through an inter-Mennonite board of directors, an information service produced by the Quakers listing defense contractors and an investment guideline review committee.

The review committee is called together every five years. It last met in 1982 and included Howard Baumgartner, Len Geiser, Delmar Good, Ralph Gunden, Marlin Miller and Elmer Neufeld. The committee concluded that MMA's investment guidelines should avoid the idea of "achieving absolute purity" but rather emphasize making discriminating judgments in a faithful way.

*Kent Stucky volunteered the above response to the Peters' article. Kent is vice president of financial services and legal counsel for Mennonite Mutual Aid, Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526.*

# Thank goodness there's someone out there who wants to help.

Andrew Goertzen left home with his parents, Gordon and Linda, to spend New Year's Day with his relatives. He returned home March 6 . . . after two months in the hospital being treated for scalds covering more than a third of his body.

Times were tough for Gordon and Linda. After bad weather defeated their attempts at farming, they took part-time jobs away from the farm. Then came Andrew's accident. Because they had no insurance, the young family's bills were more than they could cope with alone.

"Our church family *(Immanuel Mennonite Church of Delft, Minn.)* began a fund to help us," says Gordon. "We were very thankful for their love and concern." But the financial help of friends wasn't enough. So Abe Baerg, Immanuel's Mennonite Mutual Aid representative, stepped in to see how MMA could help.

**He applied for an Emergency Aid grant from the Mutual Aid Sharing Fund . . . and soon a check for $2,200 arrived.** The grant pays for Andrew's trips to St. Paul every other week for burn treatment. And for the skin-tight special suit he wears to help his skin heal.

It's still hard for Gordon and Linda to talk about the accident . . . and Andrew still has a long recovery ahead. But, says Gordon, "the thought of someone out there who wants to help is very comforting. Our appreciation can't be commented on enough . . . and will never be forgotten."

By participating with MMA, you are the "someone who wants to help." **It's one more example of mutual aid . . . all helping each in the body of Christ.**

**Nine months back, two-year-old Andrew is recovering from his accident and enjoys life on his parents' Minnesota farm.** ***(photos by Wilma J. Harder)***

Mennonite Mutual Aid
Goshen, IN 46526

*MMA/MNA annual convention*

# Mennonite physicians and nurses look at servanthood

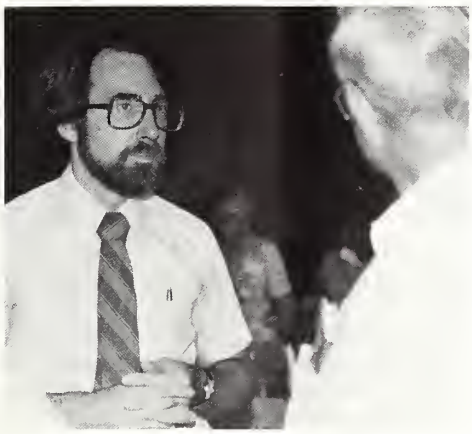
Bluffton, Ohio—About 150 Mennonite physicians and nurses met Aug. 11-14 at Bluffton College on the theme "The Christian Health Professional As Servant."

The most repeated statement at the annual convention of the Mennonite Medical Association and Mennonite Nurses Association was "getting off the donkey." So much so that someone remarked, "Our 1984 session may become known as the donkey convention."

It began with keynote speaker Don Kraybill, sociology professor at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, author of *The Upside-Down Kingdom* and co-editor of *Perils of Professionalism*. Kraybill's first text was Luke 10:29-37, usually titled "The Good Samaritan." He said the priest and Levite were professionals who, just like professionals today, could not naturally do more than they did because of their professional standards. And while Kraybill suggested all professionals need to get off their donkeys at times to serve the special needs, he conceded that sometimes it's not good to get off the donkey. To prevent burnout and poor service the professionals must sometimes remain on their donkeys and ride by.

The analogy stayed with the whole convention.

There were several illustrations of people who had gotten off their professional donkeys. Doug Smucker, Susie Wyse and Charles Cook showed slides and told of their SET (student elective term) experiences in Kalonda, Zaire; Shirati, Tanzania; and Dhamtari, India (respectively). These cross-cultural medical training settings had enriched their lives and sensitized them to needs in developing countries. Janelle Goetcheus, medical partner in the Columbia Road Medical Center begun in Washington by the Church of the Saviour, told of serving the "poorest of the poor." She called for more Christian health workers to take on the nature of the poor and powerless so that Christ can use them as liberators. When Goetcheus finished her portrait of the obstacles and challenges in serving the poor, the whole conference was hushed in reflective self-searching. Paul T. Yoder, family physician from Harrisonburg, Va., and with 21 years of missionary service in Ethiopia, called professionals to get off their donkeys and to have a personal faith, a perceptive mind, a pertinent vision and a pervasive discipleship that serves a "lame humanity."



*Don Kraybill, keynote speaker at the Aug. 11-14 MMA/MNA convention at Bluffton, Ohio, entered into discussion with some of the participants after his first presentation.*

In keeping with the active servant theme, Don Kraybill challenged the doctors and nurses to consider Jesus' "towel and basin" (John 13) to be the "tools of shalom." If they wanted it more relevant to their calling, Kraybill said, "Think of the bedpan assignment as a significant task in the age of shalom."

At the annual MMA/MNA banquet, Elvina Neufeld Martens, Hammond, Okla., was named the 1984 Physician of the Year. Martens works with Indian services in Oklahoma and served about 20 years in missionary medicine in Zaire. Kathryn E. Hostetter, Harrisonburg, Va., was named 1984 Nurse of the Year.

Carley Jane Brubaker, nurse practitioner from Scottdale, Pa., gave the banquet address, calling professional people to be "transitive vitalizers." Brubaker said studies show mothers are the most significant influence (transitive vitalizers) in shaping children's values. But fathers have a great opportunity to do more. And Mennonite professionals, by their emphasis on "doing," have been good transitive vitalizers toward servanthood. Carley urged all of God's servants to deliberately keep on working at this.

The 1985 MMA/MNA convention is scheduled for Aug. 1-5 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.

# *MMA approves SET placements*

Bluffton, Ohio—Mobilization for Mission remains "the most exciting dimension of the Mennonite Medical Association," Erland Waltner, executive secretary, told the annual business meeting of MMA (with a membership of over 500 physicians). In the last year 17 applications were approved for medical students to spend a semester at an MMA-affiliated and approved cross-cultural setting as part of their medical training.

SET (student elective term) centers are in Kentucky, Haiti, India (Dhamtari), Tanzania, Paraguay, Zaire, Taiwan, Swaziland, Lesotho, Nigeria and Israel (Nazareth). MMA usually pays travel expenses for such experiences, and an MMA member at the location helps with supervision of the student.

At the Aug. 13-14 annual MMA business meetings, seven new applicants were approved and others registered. "The cross-cultural interest continues to grow and we are glad for it," said Waltner. This program is entirely supported by voluntary donations and cost over $13,000 in the past year.

Students apply mostly from the United States and Canada, but each year there are also some from other countries. The aim of the program is to provide cross-cultural awareness and hopefully some interest in overseas medical mission service.

Lawrence Eby, a longtime MMA member, recommended that Mennonite physicians give one-tenth of a tithe to support Mobilization for Mission.

In other MMA business, a suggestion was made to explore full MMA membership by Church of the Brethren physicians.

A proposed MMA statement on the global nuclear arms buildup was presented for a first reading. It will be edited by the executive, sent to heads of both the United States and the Soviet Union and made available to the public.

A working budget of $41,500 (separate from Mobilization for Mission) was approved for 1984-85.

**At least 20,000 Christians** are currently imprisoned in various parts of the world because they professed their Christian beliefs, carried on missionary work, baptized children or distributed Christian literature, reports the International Society for Human Rights.

**A U.S. Supreme Court decision** on July 5 to uphold the requirement that young men expecting federal tuition aid for college must first register for the draft will not change the minds of most young Mennonite non-registrants, according to Robert Hull, secretary for peace and justice for the General Conference's Commission on Home Ministries. "These men understand our GC statement 'The Way of Peace' as a matter of conscience when it says, 'All war and all that contributes to war is sin,' and they can't see any other purpose for Selective Service registration," Hull said. "The U.S. Congress and Supreme Court evidently think that conscience is something which can be bought for several thousand dollars of federal student aid." The General Conference Mennonite Church—along with the Mennonite Church and other Quaker and Brethren church bodies—is making an effort to replace the lost federal student aid at its related colleges and to General Conference non-registrants at other institutions. People wishing to make contributions or provide loan funds are encouraged to send their contribution or request further information from the Student Aid Fund for Non-Registrants, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, (316) 283-5100.

# Mennonites send food to war victims in El Salvador

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—An interchurch food aid program is feeding over 60,000 displaced Salvadorans with food donated by Mennonite Central Committee.

The food aid program, which will have distributed over $3 million worth of food by this fall, is a cooperative effort of the Mennonites, Baptists, Christian Reformed, Lutherans and Catholics. Local church groups are distributing aid to families living in their communities who have been displaced by war.

El Salvador is in its fifth year of civil war. Recent reports from Central America indicate that increased bombing raids by the Salvadoran military have resulted in an increased number of refugees.

The country, with a population of 5 million, has over 500,000 displaced people. Thousands more have left El Salvador because of the violence. And 50,000 Salvadorans have died in the conflict or at the hands of death squads.

Jesus Ortiz, director of the food aid program which is coordinated by the Salvadoran Catholic Church, reported that high unemployment and low crop yields have also resulted in increasing hunger. "This year brought . . . an escalation of misery among the general population," Ortiz said.

He described a visit to one family enrolled in the program. The Gonzalez family settled near the town of El Nance a year ago when they had to flee from their village to the north.

Mrs. Gonzalez told Ortiz that her family often depends completely on the food aid program since her husband has difficulty finding regular work where they live. He does help with the harvest on large cotton plantations near El Nance. Ortiz said that the Gonzalez family lives in a house built of sticks, stones and some corrugated iron given to them by the Catholic church.

Ortiz reported that the program also supplies milk for malnourished children living in Pepeto, a slum area near the capital, San Salvador. The mothers have set up a nutrition center where they make meals for their children.

Local church groups decide which families need the aid. Each eligible family of six or more members receives 50 pounds of corn, 15 pounds of rice, 25 pounds of beans, 10 pounds of cooking oil and 15 pounds of oatmeal monthly.

As part of a special Harvest Against Hunger drive, MCC is raising an additional 1,000 metric tons of corn for the program for early winter. MCC workers in El Salvador are also asking for 800 metric tons of beans. In the last two years MCC has also contributed beef, blankets, used clothing, school kits and medical supplies to war victims in El Salvador.

*A Salvadoran refugee mother prepares food for malnourished children in feeding center near San Salvador.*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Mennonite Mutual Aid

THE MENNONITE
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# COMMENTS

## BRAZIL: Vila Itatiaia Is Growing

Well over a year ago we started services here in Vila Itatiaia. We now have formed a church with our own members and more candidates for baptism.

The small room, with a capacity of 40, that we constructed on the side of a house is now too small. The Sunday school has about the same attendance. We have two classes in Antonio's house and one in our house.

The attitude of the church is good and the giving is also relatively good. The church has recently assumed a new responsibility. The Mennonite churches in Brazil have for many years supported seminary students with scholarships. Our church has decided to give a scholarship in the form of monthly support to a young man, Jose Humberto, from the Guanabara church.

This will allow him to spend more time in Christian training without the pressures of holding a job too. Someone else has offered to support Abraao, a young man from our church, with the same type of opportunity.

These two young men will spend extensive time with me doing courses in theology and having controlled experiences in church work. Discipling them is such a privilege but also a responsibility.
RON DAKU

**Baptismal service of the Itatiaia and Guanabara churches, Brazil**

## TRANSKEI: Easter at Misty Mount

Easter was a special celebration at the church at Misty Mount. The celebration began on Friday evening and continued until Sunday afternoon, virtually nonstop. For me the most moving part of the celebration came at about 3:00 a.m. on Sunday with foot washing and the Lord's Supper.

I am the only white who has ever attended this church's Easter celebration. Last year during the foot washing and communion I sat and observed, but I was not invited to participate.

This year things were different. Early Sunday morning the benches were brought forward. Bishop Mpehla told me to sit on the front bench. While another man read from John 13, Bishop Mpehla wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin and washed my feet. Then the words of the institution were read and the bishop served me communion. When he had finished he sat on the bench.

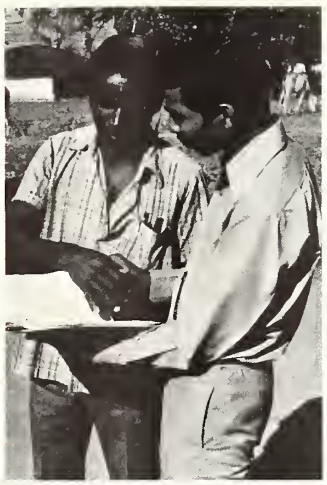
As the reading was repeated, I bent down and washed those feet which have descended into the mine shafts, worked the farms of white South Africans, and which now work on a small plot of land from which Bishop Mpehla feeds his family and sends his children to school. These are the feet of a man I have come to love.

I have never before experienced as powerfully the grace and presence of the Lord through the simple elements of water, bread, and wine as I did that early Easter morning.
LARRY HILLS, AIMM

## JAPAN: "Soonah Will Be Done . . ."

A recent significant event in my life revolves around the Crystal Chorus, of which I am a member. Last Saturday evening, we gave a concert in Miyakonojo's large concert hall. More than 700 tickets were sold.

At the concert the choir performed four Negro spirituals under my direction. During the rehearsals I had the songs translated so the singers could understand. Near the time of the performance, I had the opportunity to explain "No more weepin' and awailin'/ I'm goin' to live with God" to a few members who were trying to grasp the meaning of that part of "Soonah will be done with the troubles of the world."
JIM WIEBE, OMV



**Rev. P. K. Ram and village evangelist, India**

# INDIA: Surguja Evangelism

All 12 preachers are working hard. The gospel is being preached to many who have never heard the gospel message. The evangelists go out on their routine visits. More than 4,000 gospel tracts and gospel portions are being distributed to people who are able to read.

This year a Bible study meeting was held for two days at the village of Batuabuda. Christians, including new converts, came from 15 different villages. They brought along their own rations. Three separate classes were conducted for the aged, youth, and children. New songs were taught. People testified that they experienced God's rich blessing.

A Vacation Bible School teachers' workshop was held at Ambikapur. Later VBS was conducted in five different villages. One hundred and sixteen Christian and non-Christian children joyfully attended the classes.

Adult literacy classes are being conducted in two villages. A total of 35 people are attending regularly.

All staff members were present at the annual Bible course retreat held in Ambikapur. The book of 2 Samuel was taught. The evangelists then taught this book to their respective congregations during July and August.

REV. P. K. RAM, Evangelist in-Charge

# COLOMBIA: Youthful Enthusiasm

The young people of two of the Mennonite churches in Bogota presented a musical drama to a full house. One of the girls had authored this. They really outdid themselves. It was an excellent presentation of the life and ministry of Christ, with a special emphasis on the Passion week.

These young people have become very active as a result of the young people's retreat in Cachipay. The seed was planted. They learned to know each other. With real enthusiasm and dedication they have worked to encourage the young people in the churches outside of Bogota to become more active and involved. There is a lot of potential for the churches.

HECTOR AND MARY VALENCIA

# LESOTHO: Worthy Ambassadors

I say that this is a sad occasion because we are parting with the Titus and Karen Guenther family to whom we feel deeply indebted for the meritorious service they have rendered to our church and to the Basotho community during their short stay in Lesotho.

When one reviews missionary activity in Africa, one realizes that it can be divided into three stages. Stage one was that of the great pioneers who went out to new lands to preach the good news. The second stage was the paternal stage in which a church had been planted, but the mission was still dominant in guiding its affairs.

We are now in the third stage which we should rightly call the fraternal stage in which the church is dominant and the mission serves within its life. Missionaries in this stage must of necessity be different from the great pioneers because they are serving a different task. In the days of the pioneers, individualism, courage, and adventure were the high notes.

Today cooperation, humility, and wisdom must be strong. In the past it was the task of the European and American churches to evangelize the world. Today it is the task of Christians of many nations and races to carry the gospel to non-Christians of every nation and race, each section of the church playing the particular part for which its experience and strength fit it.

I am sure the Guenthers are delighted to be told that they have been worthy ambassadors of their church in meeting the demands of this task which characterizes Christian activity today. With your presence in Lesotho, a true Christian fellowship has been established between Christians in Lesotho and Christians in Canada. The primary purpose of Christian fellowship is enabling Christians to serve one another and pray for one another. Our meeting here today is to celebrate the fulfillment of that purpose.

If the people at home should ask you what you have achieved while you were working with the Basotho, speak like Titus of old and say that you reminded the Basotho ". . . to be subject to the ruling authorities, to be obedient, to be prepared for every good work, not to be quarrelsome but gentle, showing complete mildness toward all people." (Tit. 3:1, 2)

REV. K.M.J. MAHASE, executive secretary of the Lesotho Evangelical Church

# CHINA: Diary Entry

Tonight I was asked whether I was religious. One of the students then said: "There are three things which are important: truth, kindness, and beauty. Science is truth, religion is kindness, and art is beauty. Do you agree?" I had to smile inwardly at this typical Chinese way of capsulizing infinity.

HERTA FUNK, CEE

Herta has just completed one year of teaching English in Chengdu, China.

**Student, China**

# Project Opportunities 1984/85

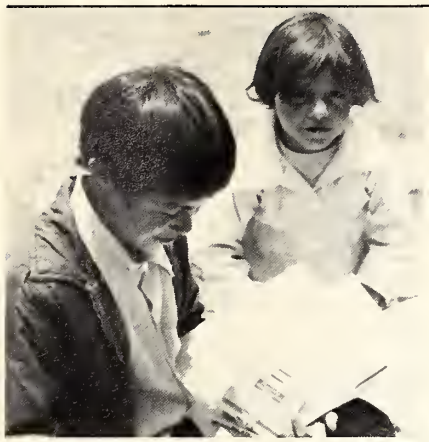
"I am pleased to present to you a new listing of General Conference projects. To focus on a specific item can generate excitement for individuals and groups. To congregations, Sunday school classes, Bible study groups, families or other groups regardless of age, I commend this list of projects. May the process of selecting, promoting and supporting a project bring joy to you and to those who will benefit from these efforts."

Vern Preheim

Vern Preheim, General Secretary.

**PROJECTS EDITION OF THE MENNONITE**

# Children & Youth



**$50** will provide new play equipment needed in the seminary nursery. MBS

**$500** subsidizes the development of a children's peace curriculum. If the curriculum pieces were priced to cover the complete costs of writers, editors, and photographers, the selling price would be considerably higher. COE

**$200** gives Tig and Karen Intagliata money to make retreats available for children and teenagers in BOLIVIA. COM

**$70** will provide support for a child in the nursery. MBS

**$700** continues young people's retreats as a part of youth activities planned by the churches in COLOMBIA. COM

**$300** allows young people in MEXICO to look forward to Vacation Bible School planned by the church. COM

# Community Service & Development

**$50** helps obtain assistance for refugee families from El Salvador and southeast Asia through the Mennonite Peace Center in Dallas, Texas, and the Mennonite Center for Newcomers in Edmonton, Alberta. CHM

**$250** conducts development projects in rural LESOTHO where John and Tina Bohn work among both men and women. COM

**$100** reduces travel expenses for a work camper. COE matches the congregation's investment up to $100 toward travel expenses for a high school student to participate in a Work Camp. COE

**$100** helps to support the Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) staff who develop units such as those who work with inner-city youth in an alternative education program for young people who are rejected by or unable to use the public school system. CHM

**$125** affirms the efforts of the Social Concerns Committee of the Mennonite Church in TAIWAN as they seek to work with the concerns of the poor and needy. COM

**$250** supports for one month an MVS worker conducting a crafts and recreation program for native youth. The program is to develop a church-related alternative to activities related to drinking in a community in which alcoholism and drug abuse are common among school age youth. The worker also assists native congregations in their children's work. CHM

**$225** means new development and literacy programs can be developed in UPPER VOLTA. COM

# Education

**$250** develops an Intergenerational Study Resource Kit of resource materials to be made available for loan from COE. COE

**$60** enables workshops to be held on the effects of TV and other media on our values and family life and helps Christians know how they can shape rather than be shaped by media. CHM

**$1000** is an opportunity to send Christian teachers like Doug and Raylene Penner, Peter Yost, and Laura Funk to teach English in CHINA through the CHINA Educational Exchange (CEE) program. COM

**$1000** undergirds the development of one Bible Study Series book. Eight Bible study books are being developed for personal and group use. COE

**$100** sponsors one of eight to ten seminars that are held in BOTSWANA throughout the year. COM

# Evangelism & Church Planting

**$600** is a grant for a chaplaincy program at Champa Christian Hospital in INDIA. COM

**$1000** helps Sandra and Carl Liechty and Nancy and Perry Ferris as they participate in church growth efforts along with national pastors in the sprawling metropolis of Tokyo, JAPAN. COM

**$200** helps to support workers in North America who are planting Spanish language churches and pastoring refugees escaping persecution in Central America. CHM

**$630** develops the Spanish evangelism thrust in MEXICO. COM

**$1000** will help support pastors who are planting Chinese language congregations among new immigrants in North America. The spiritual resources of these fellowships are especially needed when new immigrants face cultural adjustments, family dislocation, language problems, and job search difficulties. CHM

**$720** continues evangelism efforts in places like Surguja, INDIA, where during the last months of 1983, 29 persons were baptized. COM

**$200** supports a seminar or conference that Larry Hills uses for Bible teaching in the TRANSKEI. COM

**$1000** helps support a pastor in one of the mission congregations subsidized by the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council. So far about half of the congregations have become self-supporting. CHM

**$480** is rental assistance for the developing congregation in Madrid, COLOMBIA. COM

# Leadership Training

**$240** provides January Interterm tuition for a qualifying student. MBS

**$50** supplies an Urbana '84 scholarship for a Mennonite student to attend the 14th Inter-Varsity Student Missions Conference, December 27-31, 1984. COE

**$650** covers the cost of one month of study for a Hispanic leadership couple and their family at our pastoral leadership training school. CHM

**$540** allows the Center of Studies in URUGUAY to provide Bible and Anabaptist studies for future church leaders. COM

**$50** underwrites a Foundation Series resource person's travel for a 250-mile congregational visit to lead a workshop or resource an education committee. COE

**$300** gives a scholarship for a BRAZILian to attend seminary for one year. COM

**$1000** provides tuition and fees for one semester for a student from abroad. MBS

**$1000** allows five Mennonite Marriage Encounter lay and pastor couple leadership teams to receive training. COE

**$400** is an encouragement to two students in seminary preparing for leadership in one of the congregations in HONG KONG. COM

**$1000** develops lay leadership through Theological Education by Extension (TEE) in rural areas of ZAIRE where Rick Derksen is giving some leadership. COM

**$1000** pays expenses of Project: Teach resource persons for these week-long teacher training events scheduled in various locations throughout North America. COE

**$670** enables students at the Mission Training Center at AMBS to better understand global missions and cross-cultural communications. COM

**$1000** means church leaders from ASIA, AFRICA, and LATIN AMERICA can pursue advanced studies in North America not available to them in their own countries. COM

# Resources

**$75** will help buy Spanish translations of Foundation Series for use in North America. CHM

**$50** rents a film for Harlan and Clair de Brun to use in their Bible teaching ministry in LESOTHO. COM

**$140** publishes songbooks for CEMTA mission work in PARAGUAY. COM

**$250** sends "Occasional Papers on Anabaptist Themes and Biblical Interpretation" to mission centers around the world. MBS

**$50** will contribute to providing U.S. youth with information about registration and involvement in military service. This material will help balance the attractive brochures and offers made by military recruiters. CHM

**$500** enables Gail Wiebe and Anne Garber in UPPER VOLTA to put a local dialect into writing and teach it to village people. COM

**$125** continues to make needed literature and teaching materials available in BOTSWANA. COM

**$500** helps support the editor of a new publication "Annotated Mennonite Bibliography of Articles on War and Peace." MBS

**$100** from 33 people is our conference's share of the CHOICE IX radio spots to help resolve marriage conflicts. David Augsburger's book, *When Caring Is Not Enough*, is the basis of the 13-week series to be released in late 1984 as a radio outreach for local congregations. CHM

**$450** provides literature and correspondence courses through the literature department of the Mennonite Church of ZAIRE where Leona Schrag serves in an assisting role. COM

**$200** sponsors activities such as women's retreats and Sunday school teacher training in COLOMBIA. COM

**$360** will help make available a consultant on the needs of aging for local congregations wanting to learn more about the concerns of the elderly and how the resources of elderly people need not be wasted. CHM

# Special Projects

**$1000** is partial subsidy for the purchase of the Mennonite Center in HONG KONG which serves as a hub for the variety of ministries—youth work, teaching English, Anabaptist seminars, church planting, etc. COM

**$700** goes toward the replacement of an outdated vehicle for COM workers, Ben and Pat Pauls, in PARAGUAY. COM

**$350** from 100 people would continue to express our conference's gratitude to retired missionaries who gave many years of service in the cities and native communities of North America. The Missionary Supplemental Retirement Fund is one way to say thank you for a valuable mission heritage upon which we are still building. CHM

**$350** builds a new wall for the church property in Parais de Norte, BRAZIL. COM

Send your gifts to **General Conference Mennonite Church**
P.O. Box 347, Newton, KS 67114 or 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4

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**Children of all ages carry the precious commodity—water, Botswana**

# BOTSWANA: We Call It Leuba

Three syllables pronounced *Le oo ba*. It means drought—drought that is slowly but ever so surely wringing the life out of this land. For three years the farmers have planted good seed and harvested only parched ears. It is a growing and disturbing acquaintance with a creeping, intractable calamity.

For the villagers and desert tribes who for centuries lived a life of amazing resourcefulness hunting, gathering, and herding their cattle, the drought is a matter of daily desperation. We hear stories of small bewildered bands wandering along desert trails in search of water, the thirst of mothers and young children relieved only by the rinds of the bitter desert melons clenched in their parched mouths. I was stunned to see an elderly man drop in full stride, collapsing from weakness and hunger while following his herd of cattle.

But even in this drought I see signs of resilience and hope. The accacia, marvelously equipped to live in thirsty places, keep their thorny composure while generating massive quantities of seedpods as though to promise better days. The only remaining swatch of green in our backyard orchard is a plucky mulberry.

Public prayers for rain are now a weekly occurrence. It is said about the cooking fires at night and wherever people gather to cluck their tongues and commiserate that this is a visitation of God upon a wayward nation. Meanwhile we try to avoid casting hopeful glances skyward since local lore says that those who look for clouds only prolong the drought.

JONATHAN LARSON, AIMM

# TAIWAN: God Lets Us Help

The picture shows a little boy and a little girl with watering can, shovel and rake planting a garden. The caption reads, "God lets us help when he makes miracles."

In recent months we have felt involved in the making of a miracle in the Li Ming Church. Six months ago the church was expected to die—it did not seem right while we were talking about opening new work to let one of the churches close. It did not seem in the character of the Lord to give up when we had worked and prayed so long for the church to be established in the Li Ming community.

Last Sunday we felt as if the miracle had happened. The Li Ming church building was dedicated. It was financed with our own money, a grant from FOMCIT and a U.S. $20,000 loan from CES. The loan was jointly taken out by Li Ming and FOMCIT. Each is committed to pay back half of the loan plus interest over the next ten years.

The second part of the miracle was that recently Han got a check ready for $10,000 to send to CES to pay back our part of the loan completely. Money which had come in from our people in Li Ming, other Mennonites in Taiwan, and our home church in Canada, all made up the ten thousand.

We have not only been concerned with buildings but have been deeply involved in the lives of people, their sicknesses, and their spiritual pilgrimages. Their problems become our problems as we seek to bring them before the Lord.

The congregation has called a full-time national pastor to continue in leadership after we are gone. It will be another test in faith to be able to support a pastor. We think we are in for another miracle and it is exciting.

HAN AND MARTHA VANDENBERG

**Li Ming Mennonite Church, Taiwan**

# ZAIRE: Signs of Spiritual Growth

Many opportunities to share with the Kinshasa congregations come to us. The Easter service at Massina II, one of the Mennonite congregations, was an encouraging experience. It is a relatively young fellowship guided by lay Christians. They asked me to serve that morning.

Twelve people asked for baptism. It was the first baptism in the young congregation and consequently a very special service for the people of the fellowship. The weather was beautiful, providing a worshipful atmosphere; the baptism at the brook was held before the worship service.

The worship service was well attended. Two groups from the church and a kimbanguist choir from the community sang during the service. The Lord's Supper was observed after the service and a fellowship meal.

It was a very meaningful day for the congregation and they expressed a real sense of gratitude for what the Lord had done for them. They honored me as well for my services with the statement, "You are a son of the country."

PETER FALK, AIMM

# COLOMBIA: God Blesses Marta's Baby

My friend, Juan, and his wife live in primitive and very simple housing on a small coffee farm. Their granddaughter, Marta, recently went through the traumatic experience of becoming an unwed mother, so had come to live with

her grandparents.

Marta's life had been difficult. She was raised as an orphan after a tragedy when her father shot and killed her mother. Now Marta had given birth to a baby girl whom she named Sylvia, after her mother.

Yesterday I went to visit Juan. As I was about to leave, I told Marta that I would like to see her baby. I had hoped to pray for the baby. Before I could even ask, Marta said that she would like for me to pray for the baby. She wanted to rear the baby with the blessing of God.

The baby was awake. I cradled her in my arms while Marta and Juan stood by. I decided to keep my eyes open during the prayer so that I could look at the baby. As I began to pray I noticed that the small face was in repose. I continued, "Lord, I pray that the Holy Spirit may fill this life and that your presence and love may abide in her." To my surprise and joy, I noted that during those words the baby's face lit up. A very pleased and delighted smile came on her small face, as if some deep inner knowledge was responding to the spoken prayer. As I prayed for the mother the baby's face returned to a normal tranquil state.

I couldn't resist praying once more for the love of God to fill this baby, since I was a bit curious whether the baby would respond again. Indeed she did. Again a smile lit up her face as if something within was responding to the prayer of my heart and lips.

It deeply impressed me. I told Marta and Juan what had happened. I wondered, as I thought about it, whether an untarnished little soul and spirit from the depths of its subconscious could possibly respond so early and beautifully to the presence of God's Spirit?

What was it that made the baby John the Baptist leap in the womb of his mother Elizabeth when Mary spoke in the Spirit? What effect does prayer have on an unborn or a newly born child, or even upon the inner life of a retarded one? Perhaps more than we know.

GERALD STUCKY

# JAPAN: Sadowara Plants a Cross

On Sunday, May 13, the Sadowara congregation had a dedication and thanksgiving service on the land where the new church is to be built. Instead of a shovel and sand we planted a cross where the pulpit will stand, designating our desire that Christ will be the center of all activities and that God's name might be glorified.

On May 16, the Mifune contractor moved in with machinery to dig trenches for the foundation. The building began in July, after the rainy season. The church is to be completed well before Christmas.

ANNA DYCK

Sadowara cross planting service, Japan

Members of Maseru United Church visit following service, Lesotho.

# ZAIRE: Actively Witnessing

One of the groups that we have been most closely involved with is a very actively witnessing Mennonite congregation in Kananga II. Though numbering only about 70 members and worshiping under a palm-branch shelter, they have planted six new, growing congregations during the last half year.

Often we are put to shame by the laughter, singing, and joy of living that we observe in the local people, in spite of their difficult existence, while we fret and fume impatiently at the difficulties and slowness of things here.

HENRY AND TINA DIRKS, AIMM

# LESOTHO: A Quality Experience

We have mixed feelings as our time runs out here in Lesotho. We are most grateful for the opportunity to have served in this context. We have learned much. It will take time to process all that has happened in these recent years.

We will miss our many friends from many parts of the world. We will miss the beauty of the mountains and the warm friendliness of a people who have so little and endure so much.

We will miss the "full house" at Maseru United Church, Sunday after Sunday—international, interracial, intergenerational, and the prolonged visiting in the yard after the service, as people enjoy the opportunity to interact personally. We have a noticeable increase in the number of black faces regularly attending MUC, not many local Basotho, but from other parts of Africa.

It makes for a quality experience, demonstrating the good news that in Christ "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." We will not find a parallel in North America, I fear.

VIRGIL GERIG, AIMM

**Timanan, Philippines**—In this small farming community high in the mountains of the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, adults from the Tiruray tribe are learning to write their names and do simple arithmetic. These Tiruray people are participants in a literacy program begun under the auspices of the Philippine Episcopal Church. Liz Andress, Mennonite Central Committee worker from Minneapolis, serves as general coordinator for the program. MCC also provided initial funding for the project.

*Liz Andress (left) meets with teachers of the literacy program for tribal Filipinos for a monthly evaluation and training session.*

**President Reagan's "major initiative"** to provide $50 million in new food aid for drought-stricken sub-Saharan Africa actually provides not one cent in new funding, according to a report from Inter Press, the Third World news service. Reagan actually took money already available for food aid and declared it to be a new program, Inter Press said.

# Vocational training in Lebanon continues amidst turmoil

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—Every day in south Lebanon there are attacks on Israeli soldiers or their Lebanese allies. And every day the Israelis respond with gunfire, arrests, road blocks and actions that wreak havoc on the economy.

Both the occupiers and the occupied live with constant fear and distrust, reports Dan Friesen, Mennonite Central Committee worker who has just returned from Lebanon.

In the midst of this uncertainty a small group of people in south Lebanon are preparing for a better future at three MCC vocational training centers.

In Ein el Helwe about 100 men and women are learning English or a trade at Salam School, which is operated by MCC and the local YMCA. When the school opened in 1983, only vocational classes were offered. But recently an extension has been built onto the school using a $50,000 grant from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

"We can now have classes all day," Friesen says, "English in the mornings and electricity, plumbing and building in the afternoons." Friesen, a native of Hillsboro, Kan., who has worked in Lebanon since August 1982, predicts that eventually several hundred students will be able to attend Salam.

Several times the school has been closed because of security problems and shootings. Other times the students are afraid to come. "It is not illegal for us to have young men together (at the school), but it is highly suspect," he explains.

One night a person was killed within the school compound during a gun battle between Palestinians collaborating with Israel and Palestinian nationalists. The next day Israelis bulldozed one of the walls of the school and collaborators accused Friesen and several of the students of hiding weapons there.

"They didn't find any (weapons)," says Friesen, "but we were glad" for the diplomatic skills of the school's administrator.

In Bourj Shomali camp, which is adjacent to the south Lebanon city of the same name, 31 young women are learning embroidery and tailoring at a sewing center operated by MCC.

"We are interested in teaching them to sew so that they can earn money, help support their families and lift their spirits," says Friesen.

"We want to rebuild the social structures and ties that were there before the Palestine Liberation Organization left. We want them to think beyond their family units (again)," he continues.

A typical girl at the sewing center has lost one or two of the males in her family. They were most likely killed or imprisoned, Friesen explains.

The third MCC vocational training project is a school in Rashidaiye, near Tyre, where young men study carpentry, electrical wiring and plumbing.

MCC initiated its income generation projects in Lebanon in 1982 in response to the Israeli invasion of south Lebanon. The goal was to enable families to resume businesses that they had prior to the fighting. In mid-1983 the focus of the program shifted and MCC concentrated on helping poorer families, single-parent families, handicapped individuals, those just released from Israeli detention and those without marketable skills. It was during this time that Friesen set up the three vocational training centers. *Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker*

## *Houser appointed assistant editor, Sommer editorial assistant*

Newton, Kan.—The General Board of the General Conference has appointed Gordon Houser as the assistant editor of *The Mennonite*.

*Houser*

Houser, who had served six years on the General Conference magazine's staff as editorial assistant, began the new assignment July 1 on an interim basis until the appointment could be confirmed in August. As assistant editor, he manages the production of the magazine, edits the news and works closely with editor Bernie Wiebe.

A 1976 graduate of Wichita (Kan.) State University with a bachelor's degree in linguistics, Houser worked as a carpenter before beginning work with *The Mennonite* in 1978.

Houser is a member of New Creation Fellowship, Newton, Kan. He is married to Jeanne (Schuler) Houser, a social worker. They have one son, Ethan.

Taking over as editorial assistant of *The Mennonite* on a half-time basis is Sharon Sommer, who had served as secretary for *The Mennonite* and General Conference News Service since September 1983. Her duties include copy- and proofreading, filing and record keeping.

A graduate of Biola College, La Mirada, Calif., and former student at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., Sommer served with her husband, John, as missionary to Japan under the Commission on Overseas Mission from 1970-73. She is a member of Faith Mennonite Church, Newton, Kan., and has two children, Michelle and Brian.

**The Kingston (Ont.) Mennonite Fellowship** is a small, intergenerational group starting its third year in September. Weekly meetings consist of about one hour of Bible study and one hour of coffee and social time. People interested in visiting or joining the group may contact Heinz and Leola Becker, 810 Vintage Court, Kingston, ON K7M 7A5.

**World Food Day** is again being observed worldwide on Oct. 16. Begun in 1981, the event marks the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945. More than 150 nations participated in World Food Day activities in 1983. It is endorsed by some 300 voluntary organizations, including Mennonite Central Committee. The MCC U.S. Development Education Office, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, has packets, brochures and other materials that will be helpful to church groups planning special hunger awareness activities on or around Oct. 16.

**Mennonite Mutual Aid** has suggested Sept. 16 as Mutual Aid Sunday for congregations of all Mennonite churches. Since its creation in 1982, an increasing number of congregations are participating in Mutual Aid Sunday. Mary Klassen, MMA communications manager, has compiled suggestions for Mutual Aid Sunday in the Mutual Aid Sunday Resource Guide "Committed to Caring." Copies are available by request from Mennonite Mutual Aid, Church Relations, Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526.

# MCC worker discovers a refreshing style of working

Umtata, Transkei, South Africa (MCC)—We worked together damming off the spring so that its water could be led down through a pipe to our newly fenced-off community garden. After an afternoon of work, we came down to a hot meal prepared by a few women garden enthusiasts. We ate, had tea and chatted into the setting sun. Then everyone went off to their families.

Maggie, my wife, turned from her good-byes to find me smiling and asked why. I had spent the day working with five other men doing what I would have formerly considered to be the work of two. The day had been soothing and refreshing. Maggie groaned and teased, "Oh, oh. That's good-bye to North America. Now you're hooked."

I reacted, "No, we just have to be strong in taking something of this way of working with us when we return there. It has got to be as important to help North Americans to slow down as it is for us to help Africans 'develop.' "

Only a year ago I would have been writing a different story. At that time, the task was to fence our vacant homestead. We asked three men to help us. And since I wanted to work with them, but under their supervision, we agreed that they would be in charge.

Utata Roboshe became the natural leader of our crew. And it was with Roboshe that I soon began to clash. As committed as I thought I was to not taking the leadership in the work, I failed badly and our time together became a grinding strain.

Utata Roboshe is the village artisan, builder, fencer and thatcher. In his society teachers expect two things from students: that they learn by imitating their elders and that they respect the elders' authority without question.

Roboshe organized our fencing crew with all four of us in a unit. Very little could be done without him first directing it. At first I found this way of working excellent. The laughter we experienced as a group working at each other's elbows, one task at a time, was enjoyable. And I learned a great deal.

*Dave Neufeld works with South Africans on a water project.*

But then the problems began. I had not been taught to work this way. I had been taught to learn, then experiment and return to learn more. We hold the freedom to explore, learn and plan from our mistakes as a higher good than respect for a teacher's authority.

I became frustrated with the slowness of the work. I was not being challenged to improve or become more efficient. With four men working so closely together, usually two were idle. So I began to go ahead, doing work to prepare the way for the rest. Before long we were all irritable and blaming each other for things that went wrong.

I had stepped out of my place, and I knew it. But at the same time I did not know how to get back into line. After all, I knew what I was doing and my way of working was faster and more efficient.

In Utata Roboshe's society, children, students and apprentices are taught the traditions of their elders, thus binding and strengthening the extended family and tribe. In my society we are taught to reach for our individual potential, which in turn strengthens our industrial, producer society. In Africa every task or activity begs company. In Western societies the individual who can work alone and unsupervised is prized and recruited. Schools are geared to turn out such people.

Because we are taught differently, we also work differently. If a Xhosa person submits to the elder's way, there is not tension in the relationship and tasks can be enjoyed and completed. But in my way of working there are tensions while striving to complete the job efficiently, planning for the next step and competing for work positions. It is a good productive way of working, but it causes tension and diminishes enjoyment.

Often I catch myself planning furiously while I am working and not truly being involved in the task at hand. I stop myself now, relax and take a few deep breaths, and find enjoyment in the most tedious activities.

Lately as I am getting better at working with the flow, I am being called by my adopted clan name "Mbele" or "Spar," which means brother-in-law. And the men joke with each other, calling each other "Umlung," meaning "white person" or person-in-charge. Mostly we are enjoying being and working together. *Dave Neufeld*

## Job opening

A full-time **wrangler** is needed at **Camp Assiniboia** for a year-round position to care for horses, teach horsemanship, drive a team, herd and program management, etc.

Write or call:
Camps with Meaning
202-1483 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C9
(204) 475-3550.

## News editor needed

The General Conference Mennonite Church requires an editor for its news service. The successful applicant will write, assign, edit and distribute articles on the conference and its ministries for church press and other media. This will be a three-quarters-time position.

Applicants should have academic training and professional experience in print journalism, be familiar with the General Conference and be willing to travel. Beginning date is Nov. 1, 1984.

Apply by Oct. 1 to:
Communications Director
General Conference Mennonite Church
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114.

**The Mennonite Fellowship of Rosthern** (Sask.) officially began June 3 by celebrating its covenant, which included 29 members. Two more were added the same day as Yvonne Isaac and Barbara Nickel were baptized by Irvin Schmidt, the group's pastor. The fellowship plans to become part of the General Conference.

# Whatever happened to energy efficient homes?

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Home construction in many parts of the United States has been increasing again since the recent economic recovery.

But most of the homes being constructed today are not energy efficient. And environmental concerns seem to be neglected.

Houses are not positioned so that owners can make use of the sun's energy. Builders promote huge, oversized houses, even though most families have no more than two or three children. Suburbs continue to swallow up prime farmland.

Home builders are installing electric baseboard heat, correctly anticipating oil and gas shortages in the future. But where will the electricity of the future come from?

Today's electricity is generated from coal, natural gas, water power, nuclear energy and petroleum. The amount of electricity produced from hydro or water power cannot be greatly increased. Nuclear energy has its problems. As natural gas and oil are depleted, more coal will be used. Yet as the use of coal increases, so will acid rain and air pollution.

In most parts of the United States, simple passive solar home heating can provide at least half of the heat needed. Solar heating combined with maximum insulation is clearly the best way to heat homes and conserve energy and reduce environmental problems.

Yet many home builders and home owners are ignoring solar technology and are insulating only modestly. Why?

Many people in North America feel that there never was and never will be an energy or environmental crisis. The housing industry traditionally has been built on the premise that fuel is available, unlimited and cheap. Many North Americans do not equate Christian stewardship with conservation and preservation of our natural resources.

Builders who look at their work as simply a profit-making business do little innovation. They feel they have little to gain and much to lose by using new construction methods and materials.

The homeowners who do want an energy efficient home often cannot afford one. Banks seldom loan money to people building non-traditional homes.

Our government has not promoted energy efficient housing recently. Much of the research done in the late 1970s has been halted.

But few scientists today would suggest that the overall energy situation is improved since 1978.

Energy shortages and threats to the environment will not disappear if we ignore them and conduct business as usual. We need clearer teaching on the relationship between stewardship and God's good creation. Home builders and buyers must together plan and design homes more responsibly.

All of us need to promote responsible resource use. We ought to elect government officials who are interested in finding long-term solutions to energy and environmental problems.

Business leaders and economists must cease the irresponsible rhetoric that suggests that economic growth can go on as it has in the past without any serious effect on the earth's natural resources.

The energy crisis is not over. The environment is still being threatened. The problems may be only beginning.

Christians must become responsible stewards of the created world—home builders and home buyers included. *Art Meyer*

**Approximately 150 Mennonite churches** in Manitoba are again sponsoring a Mennonite Central Committee auction sale, to be held Sept. 22 at the Morris Stampede Grounds. The sale, which will raise funds to assist Third World countries in relief and development projects, will feature handmade quilts, homebaked foods, packaged frozen meats, farm produce, crafts, antiques and machinery.

**A total of 1,767 people** attended 23 Evangelism and Church Development Seminars throughout the United States and Canada during the 1983-84 school year. Sponsored by the General Conference and the Mennonite Church, the seminars contain three options: "Dynamics of Church Growth," "Friendship Evangelism" and "Models of Church Growth." Each is designed to provide training in outreach and church planting. The seminars need to be scheduled four to six months in advance. Interested churches should contact Melba Martin, MBM, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515, (219) 294-7523.

**Action for Children's Television** has urged the Federal Communications Commission to adopt a rule prohibiting arrangements where in return for airing a particular program TV stations share in the profits from the sale of products bearing the name of the program, its characters or program devices such as weapons or vehicles. According to ACT's Petition for Rulemaking, such profit sharing plans place broadcasters "in a position where self-interest in profit sharing from product sales works against the programming interests of the audience."

# RECORD

## MINISTERS

*Paul Dyck* is serving as interim pastor at Mount Royal Church in Saskatoon.

*Donald D. Nofziger* was installed as pastor at Neil Avenue Church, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 19.

*Ward W. Shelly* will begin serving as interim pastor at First Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., on Nov. 1. It was incorrectly stated in the July 31 issue of *The Mennonite*.

*Henry A. Wiens* terminated his services at First Church, Saskatoon, July 31.

## WORKERS

*Maurice* and *Joyce Briggs*, Warden (Wash.) Church, have been appointed as missionaries to Zaire under the Commission on Overseas Mission and Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. They left Sept. 9 for six months of French language study in Le Chambon, France, after which they will move to Kalonda, Zaire, where they will supervise the garage and transport department. They have two children, Peter and Katherine.

*Paul* and *Linda (Winter) Dueck*, Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, were commissioned on Sept. 2 as voluntary service workers under COM for teaching assignments at the Mennonite Seminary in Asuncion, Paraguay. Paul will teach in the music department and Linda in Christian education. Paul is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, and Wilfrid Laurier University. Linda is a graduate of CMBC and Conrad Grebel College and has studied at Waterloo (Ont.) Lutheran Seminary. They have one daughter, Emily.

*Duecks*

*Adolf* and *Anna Ens* have returned to the CMBC community after serving two years in Uganda with Mennonite Central Committee. In Uganda, Adolf taught religious studies at the University of Makerere.

*Ronald K. Geiser* has been appointed director of public information at Bluffton (Ohio) College. He assumed his responsibilities on Sept. 1.

*Helmut Harder* will resume his teaching duties after completing a one-year appointment as CMBC's interim president.

*Earl* and *Pat Hostetter Martin*, Harrisonburg (Va.) Church and New Holland (Pa.) Church, respectively, have recently assumed responsibilities as co-secretaries of MCC's East Asia programs. They succeed *Bert Lobe* of Winnipeg, who held this position from June 1980 to August 1984. Their parents are Elizabeth Martin of New Holland and Grace and B. Charles Hostetter of Hickory, N.C.

*Annie Janzen*, Winnipeg, head cook at CMBC for the past 27 years, has resigned. She will be working for Native Ministries as a cook at Walnut Receiving Home. *Hertha Penner* has retired after 25 years of service in the kitchen. *George Friesen*, a graduate of CMBC, has become head cook.

*Ralph Lebold*, president of Conrad Grebel College since 1979, was reappointed as president for a third term, which will run from July 1, 1986, to June 30, 1989.

*Brian* and *Linda Matwichuk*, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, have joined the CMBC faculty as resident co-directors. Their responsibilities are the administration of the campus residences and student development in the personal and spiritual areas. They have two children, Laura and Amy.

*Mary Oyer*, Goshen (Ind.) College, will be joining the CMBC faculty for the spring semester. Mary specializes in the areas of hymnology, music of non-Western cultures, and the relationship between Christianity and the fine arts.

*James H. Satterwhite* has been named professor of history at Bluffton (Ohio) College.

*Jeffrey Schaub* has been appointed executive vice president, hospital division, for BroMenn HealthCare.

*David Schroeder* has been granted a sabbatical leave for the 1984-85 academic year from CMBC. Together with his wife, Mildred, he will be spending the year at Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, England, where he will be lecturing on the New Testament and peace studies as well as studying in the library.


### Pastor needed

**Hamilton Mennonite Church** has an immediate opening for a pastor.

Please send inquiries to:
Abe Friesen
395 Cottingham Crescent
Ancaster, ON L9G 3V5.

**Mennonite Conciliation Service,** a program of Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section, is one of over 30 organizations sponsoring a national conference on Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution Sept. 20-23 in St. Louis. More than 60 workshops and plenary sessions will cover such diverse areas as administering mediation centers, teaching conflict resolution skills to children, resolving conflict in churches and mediating environmental conflict. For registration information contact Ron Kraybill, MCC, Box M, Akron, PA 17501.


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## Try tithing, you'll like it

Calvin Redekop says he doesn't tithe (March 27, April 10 issues). I have no problem with people who don't tithe, and I have none with those who do. But I had to wonder how Redekop could be so informed about the negatives of tithing if he had not experienced the fun of systematic giving. We tithe and always have, not because we feel the Bible dictates it or for any legal reason. It simply works much better for us than any other method I can think of.

Some have asked how we calculate the tithe. For us it was simply 10 percent of our gross income. No, tithing does *not* undercut the spiritual and spontaneous joy of giving, neither does it become mechanical. Rather it becomes more fun to give for the simple reason that there always seems to be money in the "Lord's box" to give away. Part of Redekop's confusion might be that he has not found a satisfactory method of giving. All I can say to him is, "Try it, you'll like it!" You will also find that God keeps his promise to the tither. *Peter G. Dyck, Box 602, Boissevain, MB R0K 0E0*

July 13

## Was it fit to print?

I hardly know how to express first the anger that bordered on rage, then the sadness that seems like despair. Has *The Mennonite* always carried news stories of the type "Jennis B. Hofer . . ." (July 3 issue, p. 322)?

First, what a story for Bethany. The only thing told is that one member kills another and his son. I feel singled out; that of all Mennonite churches we alone have the sinners. *The Mennonite* prints that for all to see. How do you decide whose sin gets reported and whose remains covered up?

How can you in so short an article tell enough to even begin to offer insight? Andrew Wipf Sr. was also a member of Bethany, as are many of his relatives. The drainage is not a recent dispute but goes back a couple of generations. And it isn't just the inconvenience of water on a field, as "quarter section" sounds, but a flooding of barn and house.

I don't look for or want news of such things from other congregations. I don't understand the purpose of such news. If it's prayer concern, I doubt it generates much of that. From this side it only appears to open us and our hurt for all the world to gawk at. The only interest in Bethany I heard at district conference was about the shootings. Now we get the same from *The Mennonite*. (That probably isn't a fair statement of either the district or *The Mennonite*. But it feels that way.)

Now that some of the opening emotion is played out, what is the human interest in such events? Do we vicariously receive punishment for our own hidden sins? Or vent a righteous indignation? A righteousness we all too often don't live out in the rest of life? But having expressed our righteousness, we can go on as we were before.

A fellow pilgrim feeling out of step with you right now. *George Leppert, Box 396, Freeman, SD 57029*

July 13

*Editor's note: George raises pertinent questions. How much do we Christians believe in truth-telling even when it hurts? Bethany was also our church when we lived in Freeman. I know all the people involved in the tragedy of May 17. We did not print any big headline story on it, only 14 lines. And, yes, it was to show how even we as Christians (the Hofers were active in church, as were the Wipfs) are not free from the dangers in our world. We need to pray for each other and to be more care-fronting.*

*We too are prone to turn such a tragedy into gossip. That is regrettable. Instead we need to do so much more peacemaking with one another. I believe that the greatest challenge—and opportunity—for us to be an example to the world begins at home in our families, churches, work and communities.*

*I understand some of your hurt. Let's help each other more.*

## Children's events

Over a year ago you requested copies of some children's events I led during the time of special meetings you shared with our congregation in the fall of 1982. At that time I sent you a booklet of children's events and indicated I was working on an additional one.

I have now put together two additional booklets and hope that you and others may find them helpful. Incidentally, I am making them available to the wider church, although I realize that the demand is not great for such. I am suggesting a donation of $2 for the larger one and $1 for the smaller one, although if this seems too much I am glad to accept whatever one is able to give. This is a recycling project more than it is a money-making project.

Bernie, I continue to value your editorial contribution to *The Mennonite* and particularly your own writings and reflections. *Doug Reichenbach, Wayland Mennonite Church, Wayland, IA 52654*

July 24

*Editor's note: I won't easily forget how Doug got the young and older children excited about the children's events. The booklets of events are worth much more than $3 and I highly recommend them to all workers with children. They are creative, biblical and involve children in special worship events.*

## Choreography and dancing

It was interesting to learn from the June 19 issue (p. 299) that a name well-known in conference circles is a "choreographer"—a calling seldom mentioned in evangelical religious writings, nor one of the spiritual gifts listed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. The dictionary defines choreography as "dancing; planning dances in a ballet." Is it fair to ask if training in dancing promotes the work of the church of Jesus Christ, enhances the effectiveness of evangelism or glorifies Christ? Of course it is impossible to rank talents and Christian service in the order of their importance, but in an attempt to do so, where would we place choreography? In other words, what place does dancing have in Christian service?

An incident occurred in one of our Mennonite churches about 10 years ago. There appeared in the General Conference Sunday school quarterly the words of the song entitled "Lord of the Dance." That was the straw (someone said, "the bundle") that broke the camel's back. Immediately that church canceled their use of the conference quarterlies and subscribed to different ones. When the new songbook *Sing and Rejoice* came out in 1979, some of us were amazed and distressed that the compiler, a well-known, talented and beloved leader in Mennonite circles, had included that song (#67).

Someone immediately questions, "What's wrong with that?" The first four stanzas begin with the words, "I danced," the fourth ending with, "I am the dance and still go on." Now who is "I"? This is revealed at the end of the first stanza: "At Bethlehem I had my birth." "The Dance" is personified in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. Does not this border on blasphemy and sacrilege? To me, Jesus is *not* "the

Dance." He is my Savior, my Lord and my Intercessor whom I need daily.

Someone is certain to counter with the argument that the Bible tells us to praise the Lord with dancing. True, Psalm 150:3 says, "Praise the Lord with timbrel and dance." There are 22 uses of the word "dance" in its various forms in the Old Testament; only five in the New. But since this is directed to all believers, it can hardly be construed to refer to "educated" dancing. *C. B. Friesen, 415 East First, Newton, KS 67114*

July 27

## Mennonites and other races

The answer to the question, "Can I Be Black and Mennonite?" (July 17 issue) is, "probably not." But that doesn't make the Mennonite church "an irrelevant 450-year-old social club living under the thin veneer of something remotely resembling Christianity." The African Methodist Episcopal Church probably has fewer white members than the Mennonite church has black, but that doesn't prevent it from being a force for good in our society.

Ten years ago the woman who is now my wife first took me to the Mennonite church in Minneapolis to which she belonged. It struck me that all the members of the congregation looked alike. I don't see them that way anymore, but the memory of that experience remains. Sometime later, my wife took me to the cemetery in Oklahoma where many of her ancestors are buried, and the names on the tombstones were the same as the names on the church roster in Minneapolis. Mennonites are more than a group of white people who meet at 11 o'clock on Sunday morning; they are an ethnic group with a cultural heritage that goes back to the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation.

The Mennonite cultural heritage includes circumstances more tragic than the black experience, assuming we agree that being burned at the stake for one's beliefs is worse than being held in slavery. Mennonites do not have to apologize for victimization by "Anglo-Europeans," whoever they are, because Mennonites have also been victimized.

They are a small, close-knit group; their entire population would not fill a large city. They have clearly prescribed rules of behavior which are nowhere written down but which are ingrained into each of them by their shared experiences. These rules are difficult for outsiders to understand and accept, but they give to Mennonites a sense of belonging unknown to most larger groups. If I, a man who shares at least their racial make-up, have difficulty understanding and accepting these rules, it is not in the least surprising to me that blacks find it difficult.

What is the relevance of such a small, close group to society? Mennonites and their Anabaptist kin provide a moral example for the rest of us. There is the poignant news photo, which everyone recalls, of the Amish boy climbing the fence to escape the truant officer in Wisconsin. There are the young men in Kansas willing to go to jail rather than comply with the simple bureaucratic requirement of draft registration. These examples of allegiance to basic principles are all the more striking because of the difficulty most of us have understanding, much less accepting, them.

I am suggesting to Mr. Brown that the problem may not be that Mennonites do not accept him but that he does not accept them. I am also suggesting that their value to society would not be enhanced by broadening their beliefs in order to attract new members. Their principle value to our society is that they provide an example of another way to live. It is up to the rest of us to decide what of it is relevant to society in general. *Gary D. Jensen, 113 Willenberg Road, Lake Jackson, TX 77566*

July 30

## Studies on pride

For a number of years I have been studying the subject of "biblical pride" and its impact on and in our lives. To my knowledge there is little, if anything, on this awesome and debilitating problem. If you are aware of or interested in this subject matter, please let me know. *Rodney J. Studer, 3020 Sumter Ave., #105, Minneapolis, MN 55427*

July 31

## More on investments

Ironically, the Bible section of the July 17 issue contained a poorly argued case for Mennonite Christians not "speculating" in corporate stock investments. Redekop's myopic viewpoints regarding investments, the dynamics of the stock market and the powers which motivate the investor need to be disregarded as gross misconceptions.

Common sense and a small amount of prudence would dictate that professional Christian financial consultants be asked to describe and form competent opinions regarding choices available to the Christian investor.

Additionally, let's keep the Bible section of *The Mennonite* dedicated to its purpose. *Richard E. Honig, 1256 Stucki Strasse, Berne, IN 46711*

July 31

## Wholistic and holistic

Allow me to ask if we ought not consult the best lexical authorities about our (correct) concern for the health of the whole person: Should it be called *wholistic* or *holistic*?

It is my impression that the word holistic conveys exactly our concern for the whole man. (Can the other form be found in any good dictionary?)

A parallel problem has to do with the doctrine that all citizens are equal before the law. By logic, the doctrine should perhaps be called *equalitarian*. But as a matter of fact, the correct word is *egalitarian*.

Please do not accuse me of nitpicking; I'm concerned only that we use good English. *J. C. Wenger, 1300 Greencroft Drive, Apt. 1, Goshen, IN 46526*

Aug. 7

*Editor's note: Yes, brother Wenger, "wholistic" is on p. 1347 of my* Webster's Ninth *(which is our guideline for spellings). It is listed as a variation of "holistic," and therefore I understand your concern. As a rule we use Webster's first choice, but we deliberately make the "wholistic" exception. In the early health literature on wholistic care,* holism *is connected with many of the "far out" attempts to generate health. Granger Westberg and other Christian pioneers set themselves apart from the odd phenomena by designating their concerns as being for "wholistic" care. I have carefully followed that concern.*

## About fearing God

A 90-year-old friend, a thoughtful atheist (don't forget, the Christians of the Roman period were accused of being atheists) was puzzled by Jews and Christians when they say that we must *fear* God (editorial, May 22 issue).

Perfect love casts out all fear. He made me think. Perhaps the word to "reverence"—or to "revere"—God should be used in some places. I felt a non-believer taught me something. *Jacob J. Enz, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517-1999*

Aug. 8

# Bible studies 'write-in' at CMBC

*Bernie Wiebe*

You knew something unusual was going on if you walked along the halls of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Monday through Friday, June 4-15. Instead of students cramming in the library and classrooms, you could find four CMBC professors and two Bible institute instructors buried deep into piles of books.

They were in the library, in a seminar room and in an office, looking for all the world like students facing deadlines on major term papers.

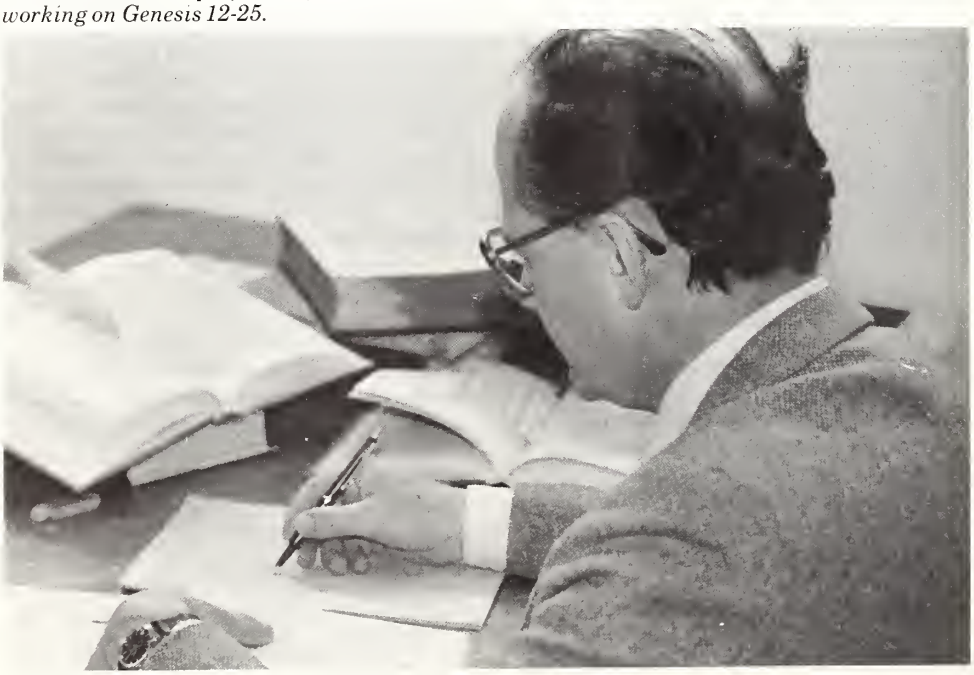
All were part of a two-week "write-in" to launch the first six volumes of a Bible study series scheduled to become available in fall of 1985.

*Phil Bender, Elim Bible Institute instructor, has accepted the challenge of Revelation studies.*

The General Conference's Commission on Education has for some time been getting requests from congregations for Bible study books that could be used by groups in homes or in churches. Similar concerns were heard by the Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and had been voiced by the staff of CMBC for several years. Requests are for resources that would not depend on other resource books, that would present questions which could then be answered in the workbook format, that would help people work through Bible texts in a sequential way, that would fit 45-60-minute blocks of time and that would provide helps so that the reader would not have to go straight from a Bible text to making its application.

Elizabeth Yoder, recently resigned COE general editor, says the latter point is probably the most unique and essential feature of this project. Many Bible study resources go from what a text says to application of the same without consideration for the text's meaning. The new Bible study series being prepared cooperatively by COE, CRB and CMBC will look at the context and try to determine meaning of a text prior to making application for today.

*Waldemar Janzen, professor of Old Testament at CMBC, was busy in the library reading room working on Genesis 12-25.*



*The new Bible studies series being worked on at CMBC is trying to incorporate part of the Anabaptist heritage. The photo shows one angle of the Heritage Centre located on the CMBC campus.*

CMBC professors David Schroeder, Waldemar Janzen, Helmut Harder and Gerald Gerbrandt are writing lessons (respectively) on 1 Peter, Genesis 12-25, Colossians and Micah. Phil Bender of Elim Bible Institute, Altona, Man., is writing on Revelation and Marilyn Peters Kliewer of Swift Current, Sask., on 1 Corinthians 1-7. Each writer earlier submitted a text proposal to a committee for approval. Helmut Harder of CMBC serves as director of the project; Eleanor Loewen of CRB is the coordinator and editing is being done by the COE general editor.

*Eleanor Loewen, Waldemar Janzen and Helmut Harder sit on one side of the table during morning meditation and process sessions.*

The writers agreed to set aside two weeks for an uninterrupted "write-in" at CMBC. Elizabeth Yoder and Eleanor Loewen, education consultant for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, met with the writers for orientation and process sessions during the first week. Here they evaluated approaches, formats and writing levels. Of great concern is that this series be usable with groups who have had no formal Bible training.

Elizabeth Yoder says this is a first in such a writing project. If the "pilot" works well, it is hoped such ventures will be repeated as long as there are Bible texts to be studied, churches who want the books and writers willing to write.

Helmut Harder said at one meeting, "It is inspiring to see six projects emerging before your eyes instead of working by yourself somewhere all alone on one project."

Marilyn Peters Kliewer expressed surprise as a younger writer to see her former professors grappling deeply with concerns similar to hers as they got the project started.

David Schroeder found himself wanting to lead people into a deeper encounter with the Bible than such a series permits.

Gerald Gerbrandt spoke of growing appreciation for writing styles that communicate at various levels.

*It could make a significant impact on the whole General Conference if we can in our churches begin to invest more energies in common Bible studies.*

A basic Anabaptist theology and an inductive study of the Bible are assumed for all writers. Scholarly debates are avoided and explanatory notes used only as essential.

A major goal is that these studies will become a common ground for studying the Bible within General Conference churches.

COE also sees this series following up the Bible survey course being released this fall. Maynard Shelly has authored *Discovery*, a series of 35 lessons in four books that give a literary and historical introduction to the Bible. It is hoped these background studies will create an appetite for direct Bible studies.

# It won't work

*Harold Thiessen*

We told You it would not work, Sir.
You'd said strange things that day—
That we should love one another,
Be pure, merciful peacemakers.

That people find greatness in serving;
That people find life by its losing.
But, you see, you can't do that.
It won't work!

You did all right by Your people.
You healed the illness in their lives;
Restored the blindness in their eyes.
It was fine, fine!! fine!!!

But You've got to be more careful,
Or, obligated to you, they will turn
And hate You. You've got to take care.
It won't always work.

James and John, Zebedee's zealous sons,
Would have made good commanders for you, Sir.
There's only one way to treat Samaritans.
Hate them,
Bring fire down,
Kill them!
We despise foreign half-breeds—
Mixed races, idol worshipers.
You should have let them do it, Sir.
That would work.

You'd made a good start in the temple.
We liked that whip of knotted cords!
We knew you meant business then, Sir.
Tables, sheep, money-changers. . . .

We laughed to see them sprawling
Embarrassed in their pride and stuffiness.
You should have set up your kingdom then, Sir.
It's the only way.

Peter had the right idea that night, Sir.
There in Gethsemane's garden:
He knew what had to be done.
He was strong, positive.

Why did you have to undo it, Sir?
When his sharp sword flashed
Why did you heal the servant's ear?
It can't work.

You should have struck them blind, Sir.
There at the cross we felt for you.
It must have hurt—what they did.
Mocked You,
Laughed at You,
Pierced You.

And the greasy priest who slapped You.
You should have smeared his powdered face
With leprosy. You can't just stand there.
It won't work.

But we're glad You're on our side now, Sir.
We know that might makes right.
And having You on our side
Makes us strong!
Makes us brave!
Makes us right!

We're glad we were born on this side, Sir.
That we're here. That they are there.
That a world's ocean lies between us.
That's the only way.

You've got to help us show them, Sir.
Those people over there.
Those Ruskies, Pollocks, Czechs and blacks
Huns, Gooks and Chinks.

They're over there, we're over here—
Which makes us right, we know.
So we humbly pray to You to help us
Show them!

You've told us how to kill, Sir—it helps.
We'll tear their babies from them.
We'll butcher them, roast them, gas them,
Rip and tear them and blast them.

If the enemy looks evil enough to us
We'll beat them to the draw. Yes,
We're glad that we're on the strong side.
That makes us right.

By the way, Sir, won't You please
Quit bothering us about The Bombs.
We're glad we've got them.
(Very glad!)
The A bomb, the H bomb, the X bomb.

The first Atom Bomb, the present Hell Bomb
The unlimited X Bomb yet to come.
Sir, we'll blow the world to bits if
It's necessary.

But, (You understand what we mean, Sir,
and no disrespect intended,)
You've got to let us do it right—
Destroy evil and evildoers.

Liquidate the mass of "others"—
Those that are different from us.
We've got to make the world safe for us, Sir.
We'll make it work.

We've told You it would not work, Sir—
Those strange things You said that day.
That men should love one another
Be pure, merciful peacemakers.

We've never tried it, of course, Sir.
But we certainly will not now.
Impractical imagining of a misguided Man.
It won't work!

# MEDITATION

## The wilderness of Shur

Dateline: August 1982
My brother has entered a nursing home.
I wander, wondering, three days without water.

Day 1: No, not you, you are too young.
I won't have it.
You are the strong one, the beautiful diver,
the musician, the composer.
I will not let you sit by a window,
sharing the room with five other men. No!

Day 2: You are the inventive one,
the patient one,
the accepting, hopeful one.
Remember when I was little
and you were a college freshman,
you drew me a picture of your room
and sent it to me.

Day 3: Finally, toward evening, some water.
(Thought it was waters, but it was bitters.)
I don't want it. Terrible stuff.
Take it away, I will die thirsty,
thank you very much.

Marah/Mama, that is some defective gene
you gave him. Altering speech.
Altering the perfect balance of an athlete.
Altering the perfect coordination
of the violinist.
Altering the infinitely precise hand
on electrical miniatures.
Trying to render him, as it did you,
nearly incommunicado, imprisoned.

This water will never be sweet,
and I do not want to drink it.

And yet another day:
What is this log? Is it in my eye?
*O, Lord, I pray thee take it out.*
*Throw it in the water if you must.*
*And, yes, I could use some healing.*

I look toward a city, sure,
whose builder and maker is God.
A city of 12 springs and 70 palms.
And you, my brother,
will camp beside that water, sure.

*Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

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A Mennonite psychiatrist shares how he responds to medical students who wonder if faith is merely a delusion. Our Bible study focuses on children in a time when child abuse too often gets headlines. Mennonite investment ethics are challenged. What do you do with your money? We visit a man who had to give up pastoral ministry because of disease.

Yes, there is something for each person interested in knowing faith and growing in faith.


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Harold Thiessen, 402 Avenue E., Snohomish, WA 98290, served General Conference churches 1948-68 at Middlebury, Ind., Donnelson, Iowa, and Summerfield, Ill. Because of Huntington's Disease he had to leave pastoral work and moved to Snohomish in 1968, where he went into a nursing home about two years ago. Harold is an accomplished musician and composer ("Thy Word Have I Hid" in *The Children's Hymnal* and "The Lord Hath Done Great Things For Us" in *Sing and Rejoice*). During his illness he also developed a hobby in electric trains to an elaborate system in his home. This article is reprinted with Harold's permission from the April 7, 1953, issue of *The Mennonite*. The poem by Muriel, Harold's sister, was written as her response to his having to enter the nursing home.

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# editorial

## *Hang loose, be concerned and take counsel*

*Robert Kreider*

In the 1984 U.S. presidential election I can choose between a candidate who was a classmate of my sister-in-law and one who grew up only 10 miles from my place of birth. Wispy personal connections, however, should not be the stuff of voting decisions.

What might be particular Mennonite perspectives on this election? I suggest a threefold response: hang loose, be concerned and take counsel.

**Hang loose.** Mennonites have long memories. We know that big governments have their shadow side. In our 460 years of experience with a variety of governments we have learned to be skeptical of political promises, skeptical of governments which portray themselves as noble and put down other nations as diabolical, skeptical of well-publicized heroics and programmed crises in election years, skeptical of simplistic military answers to complex international problems, skeptical of attractive programs without analysis of the cost, skeptical of boasts that "we despise the Russians more than they do." Skepticism is the beginning of election-year wisdom.

This is a time to look hard at the people who surround the candidates, write the speeches, apply the cosmetics, control the appointment schedules, choose the staffs, prepare the policy papers, support the campaigns with large gifts. Both candidates are captive in many and subtle ways to special interest groups. One is known by the company one keeps.

We should remind ourselves that many areas of our national life are largely beyond the control of presidents. For example, the vigor of the national and international economy. Big corporations, international oil cartels, world banking systems and other forces have ways of shaping economic processes in ways above and beyond the powers of big nation states.

Therefore, in this election year let us hang loose from idolatry, adulation and partisan passion. Perhaps U.S. Mennonites can serve their country best if they screen all political talk through a filter of skepticism, sometimes accompanied with a touch of sadness—"Father, forgive them. . . ."

**. . . but be concerned.** As Mennonites we know that our primary citizenship is in another kingdom, and as citizens of Christ's kingdom we are concerned about what governments do to and for their people. This is a good time to ask questions which others fail to ask. Our people serve in many troubled areas of the world and in areas of acute need in the United States. Information is power. Information coupled with concern is persuasive power. An election year is a good time to ask questions which many ignore. We should be aware that a letter to the editor of the local paper is worth 100 letters to the candidate.

Here are a few questions we might ask:

1. In the nuclear standoff between the two superpowers, which candidate would be more prudent in handling a nuclear crisis? Which would be more resourceful in searching for alternatives to a nuclear shoot out?
2. With both Democrats and Republicans committed to big government, including a big military establishment, which candidate promises to be more creative and determined in the task of bringing military expenditures into balance with income?
3. With the rich and the powerful having their own ways of protecting themselves, which candidate will be most attentive to those who have desperate needs but are powerless and without resources? A test of any government, large or small, is whether it is even-handed with all its people.
4. With many Mennonites living on both sides of the Canadian-U.S. border, which candidate devotes attention to chronic Canadian concerns—for example, acid rain, which Washington so long has ignored?

**Take counsel.** I am not so naive as to believe that many readers want help on their choice for the 1984 presidential election. Just in case a few do, I repeat: Hang loose—that is, watch the political scene with a friendly but detached, skeptical eye. Second, ask of those running for office the hard questions which citizens of Christ's kingdom ought to be asking. And third, discuss these issues with brothers and sisters in the church. The church is a resource in discerning between good and better, bad and worse, faithfulness and disobedience.

# THE MENNONITE

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# Let's love all who suffer

*Ronald Rich*

*Ronald L. Rich, 112 S. Spring St., Bluffton, OH 45817, is a Mennonite scholar and church worker who has served with distinction at home and abroad. Ron has been insisting for years that the media—including Mennonite papers—often lack a balanced Christian perspective. We promised him some space to share his views, and this article began well over a year ago.*

1. Some Mennonites say our leading professional commentators on international events almost always downplay abuses by leftists while stressing those of others. This bias hurts justice and peace because our unintended censorship by default weakens our active compassion for many victims of violence in the world and encourages certain rulers to continue being brutal. If we think our badly chosen words can't harm anyone, can our well-chosen words help anyone?

2. Racial minorities and women had to get up courage and pester the rest of us at length to approach equal opportunity. Let's encourage equal opportunity for varying political views. (Several people have told me of a kind of self-censorship because they feel intimidated by the mass of one-sided comment.) Our governments do *not* already express the views of nonmilitaristic dissidents in the church. Just as leading Mennonite writers are outnumbered by our governments (which are outnumbered in turn in the United Nations), others feel largely ignored in our pronouncements. Jesus criticized some religious leaders.

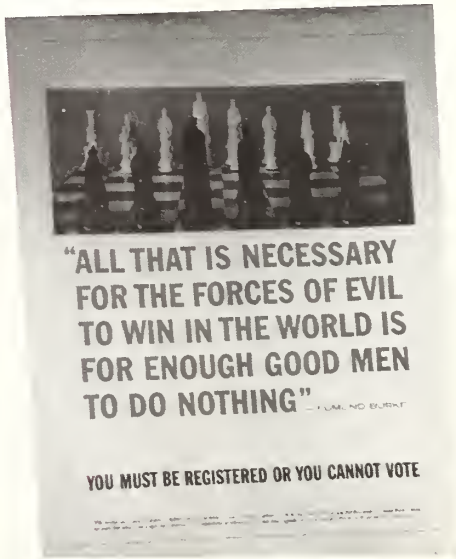
3. A few quotations illustrate our bias. Some may seem tolerable alone, but not together and in context. Our writers mention, e.g. "the zealous excesses of anti-communism" or say that someone "took a swing at the WCC (World Council of Churches) and NCC (National Council of Churches)" while at the same time writing mildly of "the tendency of some Christians from Eastern bloc countries to express the Soviet 'party line.' " Or when we do mention "the brutal conduct of past Soviet leaders" we wrongly imply that the present Soviet rulers—who are not just "leaders"—are far better. We take evil seriously in other nations. Is the phrase "evil empire" totally laughable?

A reviewer of *And When They Shall Ask* says, "I doubt whether the film is clean of all anti-Soviet clichés." Should we ask whether our writing is clean of all anti-U.S. clichés?

4. One of our news reports about El Salvador says that "*all centrist parties* (my italics) have been either eliminated by death squads, left the country or joined the guerrillas. Even . . . Duarte, whom the U.S. press presents as center left, is really right of center, according to many ordinary Salvadorans." Even without the long discussion of Duarte's proposed reforms that would be required here, and even with the last quoted phrase, is this objective news? The same U.S. press (*The Washington Post*, television news, etc.) has presented Marxist spokesmen sympathetically and does not lightly classify rightists as leftists.

5. WCC people (and Mennonites) say they can't criticize Soviet atrocities because their Russian Orthodox members would leave. Yet we don't accept similar excuses for right-wing tyrannies. We say in other situations that we must be faithful in spite of problems and leave the outcome to God; we should not put institutional concerns first. No one has perfect judgment, but blatant double standards become offensive when the "good" people persist for decades in ignoring millions of human casualties and passing by on the other side. Were the priest and the Levite worse? Don't some uneducated or impious cracker-barrel philosophers do better?

*While others have said they feel intimidated and are therefore silent, the author of this article has chosen to speak out for voices that need to be heard.*




6. The poet Armando Valladares, Fidel Castro's prisoner for 22 years, said, "During those years . . . every time a clergyman (in the United States) would write an article in support of Fidel Castro's dictatorship, a translation would reach us that was worse for the Christian political prisoners than the beatings or the hunger. . . . We also have to forgive this small group (of religious leaders excusing the dictators), because they probably also 'know not what they do.' . . . When (support for the prisoners) is known in (the) prisons, and it will be known, they will all be filled with joy" (*Catholics in Crisis*, September 1983, p. 47). Our writing may not be intended to excuse dictators, but we could include some balance to make what we say a less tempting target for misuse.

7. The MCC News Service report of a letter last year to the Soviet Union (on the Korean plane incident) was both accurate and balanced. It shows one way we could recognize one more focus of evil without undue fear of being labeled as itching to press the fatal button.

8. We now include some possible reasons, both good and bad, for our customary attitude and greatly abbreviate some reasons for a more consistent, nonconforming stance in our efforts to liberate the oppressed.

We often hear that our prophetic responsibility is only to our nation and its allies. We may feel generous, righteous and sophisticated, mostly criticizing only our side and refusing, like Jonah, to prophesy to Nineveh. Do national boundaries define our Christian identity? Such nationalism! Let's support sufferers wherever the citizens are largely squelched, precisely because so few of them can speak to their rulers. (Read any issue of *Religion in Communist Dominated Areas*, Research Center for Religion and Human Rights in Closed Societies, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115.)

Would the Good Samaritan help only victims of his own government or its allies? Yet leading Christians repeatedly advocate just such restrictions. Even if our bark is occasionally worse than our bite, let's not spoil the gospel with nationalism—reverse or otherwise.

9. We say we can't influence the communists anyway. But aren't they human? (How ironic for Christians to imply that they are not.) This entrenched, harmful, demonstrably false dogma serves dictators well. It needs far more

*Even among Christians we often give mixed signals to the world. It is time to repent biases and to seek God's justice for all.*

refutation than space allows here, but let's illustrate.

Every tyrant hopes to discourage us by appearing impervious to persuasion. But Amnesty International, a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has helped win release of prisoners of conscience on all sides of our arbitrary political fences. Closer to home, we might be interested in the prisoner-support efforts by the exiled Russian Baptist minister Georgi Vins of the IRCEBC, at Box 1188, Elkhart, IN 46515, or at 1151 Royal York Road, London, ON N6H 3Z7.

The dictators' sensitivity is also shown by their strenuous efforts to control the world's words (e.g. through UNESCO).

An exiled Romanian acquaintance of our daughter wrote us of a friend who "begged me to publicize the situation . . . to have a buffer against threats of arrest and brutal interrogations. To some degree, public opinion does make a difference even in Romania."

10. A fish doesn't see the water it's in, and we may not see our group's pervasive, partly questionable assumptions.

11. We know Mennonite resources are limited. Let's concentrate then on unfashionable problems ignored by others. We rightly note Israel's partial responsibility for the slaughter, by "Christian" militiamen, of hundreds of Palestinians, but we show little or no concern for the thousands of Syrians killed by their own government at a nearby place and time. Surely it hurts just as much to be tortured or killed by one gang or government as by another.

12. We learned during the '30s that fascism was the greatest threat at that time to peace, justice and religious liberty. Later West Germany, Italy, Japan, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Argentina and others abandoned fascism. We modern scribes need to notice that Marxism is now an expanding absolutism. Soviet caution makes them more successful than Hitler in oppressing people.

13. Jesus' mission was to save and liberate us, so we want to support liberators. Let's not simply accept the labels handed to us. Many conservatives don't conserve. (Note military waste.) Many liberals don't liberate. (Note leftist tyrannies.)

14. Besides mass murder, the world still has slavery. Millions of people are in it, and not only in the Soviet Union. Calling it forced labor nowadays doesn't improve it at all. Have the peace churches become silent on slavery, again because we may fear to irritate the extreme leftists? Many human beings need every possible help toward the most elemental liberation.

15. We are embarrassed by the simplicities of some right-wingers, and we overreact. But knee-jerk anti-anti-communism (opposition to all anti-communism, whether religious, educational, economic or political) is just as inadequate as simple anti-communism.

16. We note that communism is no longer monolithic, but we don't use that excuse to let fascists off the hook. Not all anti-anti-communists think just like Marxists, but neither do all anti-communists think like Hitler.

17. Almost 50 years ago a returning writer spoke in my community about the hard work and enthusiasm in Germany, where trains ran on time and so on. Several of our commentators, seemingly impressed by unbridled power, were taken in by this kind of uncritical report. History may repeat in our admiration of strong methods.

18. Hasn't China been a favored country where at least the travelers on guided tours often accepted the official line? In Taiwan two groups of students reminded me that opposition to their government is forbidden, but said they have most of the human rights that are still limited on the mainland. A mainland Chinese scientist working with me this year confirmed that.

19. In Thailand I listened to our son interview refugees from Cambodia and Vietnam. I also saw a play in which refugees were partly reliving, to a huge audience of other refugees, the atrocities they had experienced. We Mennonites often heard, until recently, of the humanitarian nature of those governments. Perhaps some secular newspapers presented a more accurate picture at the same time.

20. We write about helping the people where our aid, as in Vietnam, actually goes to the government and can often be distributed as if they had provided it. Such aid is Christian, but our explanations imply an identification of the government with the people, an identification that we don't suggest for rightist or democratic countries and one which is surely incorrect for many leftist ones.

21. We long for peace. But we shouldn't wear rose-colored glasses instead of facing facts. A drastic example: Surely the monstrous nuclear weapons *have* deterred some aggression since 1945, e.g. against Western Europe. No, this certainly can't work forever. These things are extremely dangerous and we ought to work for the zero option for all weapons. But if we could recognize complexities we might be more credible and, more importantly, more truthful.

22. We say that the Soviet Union is the only country entirely surrounded by

hostile communist nations and that the United States has surrounded it with military bases. These statements are both partly true but seem inadequate as excuses for our frequent silence toward today's greatest empire.

Richard Pipes, after joining the U.S. State Department, said that diplomatic cables showed the Soviets to have somewhat less capability but worse intentions than he had realized at Harvard. Surely Jesus focused on people's intentions.

23. We say it's not important to assess blame for the cold war or that our side is mainly at fault. To solve any problem we need to understand the complex causes. If we want simple questions and answers, who largely disarmed in the late '40s and who didn't? Who offered to internationalize the atomic secret? Who demanded the forceful return (and killed half) of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Europe? Our leading denominational writers long ago dropped the idea that the Soviet Union causes all evil. Some, while continuing legitimate criticism, may need to abandon the apparent idea that the United States causes most of it or just as much as the Soviets. In personal and national relations the fault can seldom be divided exactly 50-50, 0-100 or 100-0.

24. We correctly point to El Salvador as an immediate problem. Slaughters elsewhere, however, also continue. When we mention the differences between, say, the Marxist-led Sandinistas and other governments, let's recall that all other Marxist (like some non-Marxist) governments, even in Latin America, have installed repression after at most a few years of idealism. Balance might convince some skeptics of the validity of our calls to action.

25. We justify selective silence by saying that everyone already knows communism (but not democracy?) is imperfect. Also, as Jean Paul Sartre admitted, we don't want to comfort the right-wingers. Such comfort would not be worse than the mutilation of innocents under any government or worse than our tacit denial of truth.

26. Some of our people defend their refusal to ruffle the Kremlin's feathers by saying they fear reprisals against Soviet citizens, yet they never justify silence toward rightist oligarchies that way, while oppressed people almost always ask us to speak up. In safely confronting democracies but not large dictatorships we seem too timid.

27. Pacifists don't kill, but let's not, unlike Jesus, shield certain favored rulers. Having given up physical weapons, we should all the more take on the spiritual ones.

28. We rightly want to understand communists and criticize fascists. We are also called, however, to understand fascists and criticize communists.

> "We need to understand the victims of both leftist and rightist dictators . . . when the victims say tyranny is worse than war."

29. It is hard to admit error. During one presidential campaign I wrote letters for Johnson and against Goldwater on the basis of militarism. Maybe I should admit that the one candidate was much like the other. We may have to be more careful, as Mennonites used to be, about politics. If any of our major approaches are at least partly wrong, some of our best efforts could be hurting people. A traditional medical principle asks that the physician first of all "do no harm." We could emphasize this principle more when dealing with global life-and-death questions. We all need to heed Oliver Cromwell: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken."

30. Many of us yearn for simplicity in life; we want to be polarized and choose sides. We may also sometimes choose ignorance. One of our leaders wrote me—on peaceful nuclear energy—that he didn't need to read the other side of the subject.

31. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* published a study showing that faculty members tend to be conservative in their own departments but liberal on other matters. We educated people are expected to rise further above our own (not only geographical) group's prejudices and look truth in the eye. Wouldn't we want to challenge the intellectual fashions, especially where our bachelor's, master's and doctor's degrees supposedly trained us to think independently and objectively?

32. Many Canadians and Americans have had some experience with war but not with tyranny. We need to understand the victims of both leftist and rightist dictators—most of whom are murderous and some of whom are genocidal—when the victims say tyranny is worse than war.

33. We say that people in certain countries don't really want freedom or don't need our support. This may reflect, sometimes, either some arrogance or gullibility to their rulers' propaganda.

Flora Lewis quotes Mario Vargas Llosa, the noted Peruvian novelist: " 'You don't like us,' he told a French magazine recently. '. . . you disdain us with your stereotypes showing only generals who are too rich or revolutionaries who are angelic. It is vaguely racist' " (*The Blade*, April 10, 1984).

34. We needn't support Alexander Solzhenitsyn's ideas fully, but we can note his estimate of over 60 million civilian killings by the Soviets, with perhaps similar numbers in China. When confronted by a German journalist, he said, "Your reference point is a pile of opinionated newspaper clippings, but our reference point is a pile of corpses." Are we absolutely innocent under this severe indictment? Surely the victims (over 100 million?) of Marxist slaughters should get as much sympathy as the numerous but fewer victims of fascism in this 20th century.

President Reagan has a double standard favoring rightists. The United Nations and *sometimes* the United States and Canada have favored leftists. We preach that two wrongs don't make a right. Maybe the pendulum of opinion can never stop in the center, but let's try to eliminate double standards. A few Mennonite writers know the problem, yet doesn't this awareness need to be multiplied?

35. We stand with those who strive to reduce militarism in our countries and in others. We must also love the victims of *all* violence.

"Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless" (Proverbs 31:8). •

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# Learning is a process

*John F. Peters*

After my first year of arts at the University of British Columbia 25 years ago, I was determined never to re-enter university. It seemed a godless place. I felt Christian service could best be done on the street among average people or in the tropical jungle amidst "pagans."

After a decade of missionary work in Brazil, I returned to the university. I now teach in a discipline known to be agnostic in principle and objective, and humanistic in practice. But I now encourage people to seriously consider university education.

I strongly believe the maturing believer will confront issues of faith and life, will evaluate complexities in our modern age and be capable of deciphering between the chaff and wheat, gold and fool's gold, wisdom and pseudo-wisdom, right and wrong, social justice and injustice.

**Students.** I find many Christian students hold a similar view of university education as I used to. This is especially true for students from evangelical and fundamentalist backgrounds. Many treat the social activity of students and the ideology of classrooms with suspicion, fear and distance. We Christians endorse this isolation by remaining within our spiritual ghettos even on campuses.

Study is often seen as the means to a grade which will eventually produce a degree and then hopefully employment with economic and social stability. This attitude is not consistent with biblical teaching. We are to be involved with people wherever they are. Many of us suffer from "future palsy." We have a firm conviction that we will be of service to God in the future: *after* I graduate . . . *once* I'm married . . . *when* I'm settled . . . *when* I'm financially solvent.

My experience is that God does not restrict the imparting of his wisdom to those who align themselves with my Christian belief patterns. Somehow God allows me to enhance my knowledge of God through unanticipated sources. He used an ass (Numbers 22:28), a lowly shepherd (1 Samuel 16:11), a pagan nation (Judges 2:22) and a woman (Judges 4:4). Can I not see that I may learn even from my professor who does not profess faith in my God?

Some of the hesitancy we as students and teachers have in living and dialoguing with others is that we feel we should have all the answers to life, and we don't. Why hide this fact? Why not show our limitations? People like Abraham, Jacob, David, John, Peter and Paul had questions and failings. In their weakness they showed themselves human and credible. We would do well to live with questions, while learning to know stability in Jesus as Lord. I am learning in this area.

An associate of mine with many years of Christian teaching went through a period of doubt. None of us argued with him or even urged him to see the logic of believing, although the temptation was strong. We simply waited and loved him. Now he moves in faith with us.

**Professors.** Many teachers in secular institutions struggle to be "Christian" in the classroom. Some eventually adopt a behavior no different from Mr. Average Professor, possibly with some guilt. Teaching is enhanced when the teacher has more than a passing concern for students. Time restraints keep us from relating personally to all students, but I find that a meaningful identifica-

tion with three or four students per year is more significant than none.

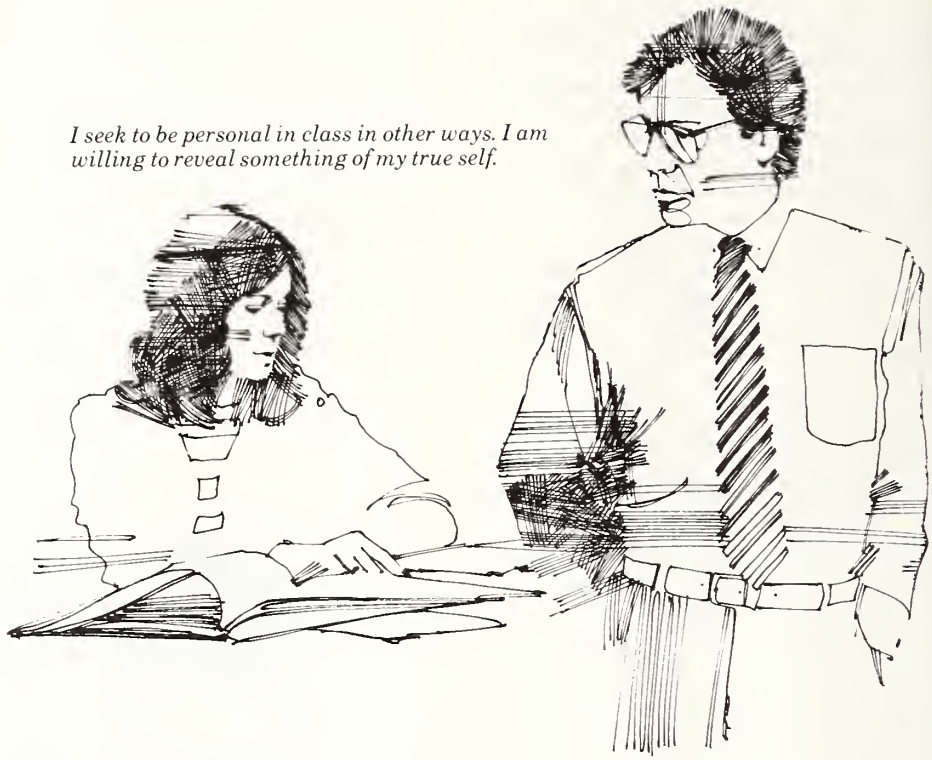
A step in coming to know students is to learn their names (God recognizes each of us by name—Isaiah 45:3). I make a special effort to learn names. I look at the class list before and after class. I seek to learn one or two more names during each class. I take the time to hand the assignments back personally in class (rather than have the students pick them up off the desk).

My goal is to maximize *life* learning during the time I am with students rather than to restrict learning solely to my discipline. Within the first three sessions I make sure there is an opportunity for students to interact with me and others in class. In this way I encourage students to participate with me in the learning process. The norm is established that students are permitted to address the subject at hand from whatever their understanding. Their contributions are not ridiculed or belittled. I feel this is crucial within the first few weeks; otherwise the student expects the professor to do all the talking, and the student becomes passive and distant. This means at times I wait for student responses. There have been silences of 60 seconds. Class members become embarrassed with the silence. I am becoming more comfortable with silence. To be silent and to wait is a way of learning.

This form of learning is not necessarily Christian. It makes good pedagogical sense. It shows an instructor genuinely cares for students.

Such teaching is more time consuming than the conventional method. It may mean less time for research (but not the exclusion of research). At this point I am prepared to choose this alternative. I find this choice more personal and rewarding as Christ's servant. At the same time I respect a Christian colleague who has conscientiously chosen the "more research" option.

I also seek to move subject matter out of the abstract into the concrete and personal. The way we present our concepts can be readily used to mask ourselves and move us out of the flesh and blood of life. Recently, in answer to the question "How has your family positively affected you?" two students responded, "Family usually . . ." and, "Commonly the family. . . ." I abruptly terminated the evasiveness and insisted that the students refer to their families.



*I seek to be personal in class in other ways. I am willing to reveal something of my true self.*

Efforts toward objectivity and conceptual thinking in the social sciences have—in many instances—removed us from the core of our true being. Our academic objectives and jargon subtly become a disguise for who we really are.

Each of us has an opportunity to incorporate more wholistic living into our teaching situations. For example, in sociology we legitimately address injustices in our society. I may debunk myths and attack powers in the hierarchical social structure in the cool demeanor of the stereotyped professor. Or I may respond to Doug's question directed to me, "So what are you doing about it?" in a responsible manner. Upon attempting this on one occasion there was an unusual hush in the room. That alone was worth a whole month of teaching.

I seek to be personal in class in other ways. I am willing to reveal something of my true self. This includes, upon occasion, a remark about my beliefs. I used to do this apologetically, but now I do this cautiously and unashamedly. The Marxists, agnostics and Republicans often declare their positions.

**Professor and student.** In the Christian tradition we are at least ideologically familiar with the concept of unity which cuts across distinctions found in the socio-political-economic world. I would like to adopt this model in the university community. We would interact with one another as of equal worth with no distinctions of sex, age, discipline and particularly no student-professor hierarchy. Both the student and professor would take risks in order to communicate with each other. And both would make efforts to apply faith to learning.

This process necessitates a mutual recognition that ours is a journey of life where we can learn together. We may be at different stages. We may even demonstrate and verbalize our faith in a different mode. In such community we endeavor not to judge or condemn our members for such honest inquiry.

Many of us find contact with non-Christians clumsy and awkward. We tolerate such situations but keep them to a minimum. Most students are not beer-bloated, sexually indiscriminate or smoking pot, as we sometimes imagine. Even if they were, they are people whom God loves. Many of those "others" have high moral standards and show genuine love and public concern. Many, however, shy away from aggressive and blatant "witness" tactics.

Learning is an ongoing process. We need to listen, observe, ruminate, integrate. God wills this to take place in our academic community of Christian and non-Christian students and professors. •

# Wisdom's ground rules

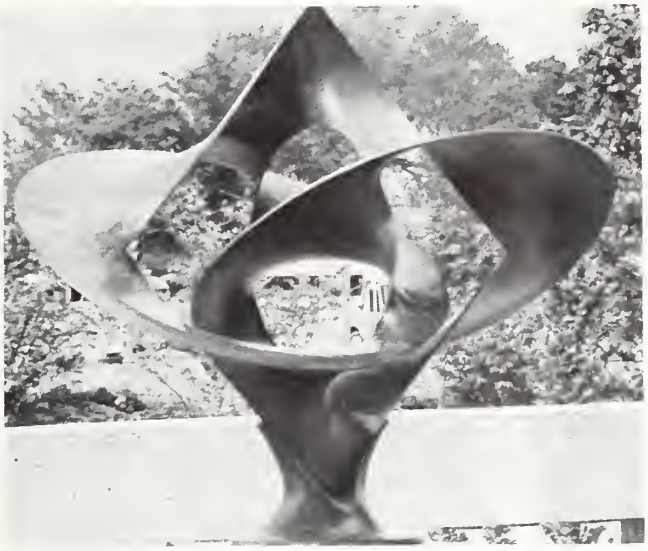
*Ted VanderEnde*

We will assume that biblical wisdom involves three interdependent levels or stages. The first is the wisdom which gives advice in the complexity of everyday life. It provides rules needed to cope with the moment-to-moment experiences that come to each of us on a normal day. The second level gives guidance when the normal and the expected don't happen. It speaks of a wisdom needed when the established answers do not fit, when the handy rules sound trite and incomplete. The third level is the wisdom that belongs to the kingdom of the Lord and interprets life from the perspective of the enduring and eternal kingdom. It is taught by the wise ruler of that kingdom, Jesus Christ. Our final three studies in wisdom literature will touch on these levels.

The first level is the most mundane: *rules for daily living*. The sages keenly observed that our common life can be upset when we abandon proven moral and social skills. Doing things right means enjoyment and progress, stability and shalom. The angry man, the nagging woman, the lazy child spoil the order of domestic life. Knowing how to handle money, stay away from violence, submit to the social order—these are advantageous for a society. The book of Proverbs is almost exclusively dedicated to this level of wisdom. The proverbial material is true because it has been tested and tried. Yet they are not presented as absolutes but as those rules which normally can be observed. They are the distillation of the wisdom of the wise and carry the seal of inspiration. This level says, "Do these things and you can expect happiness and peace in your daily walk. Do these things and you shall live. But remember, life is more complex than following some rules and suggestions. You must make your plans, but God may decide differently."

*Life is more complex than following some rules and suggestions.*

Proverbs deals with disciplining our common human weaknesses: anger, laziness, impatience, the unbridled tongue, selfishness. It gives direction on how to live in home and society: how to handle money, the boss, your wife or husband, how to raise the children. These axioms also embrace the moral laws of God. It is foolish to lie, to steal, to murder, to be greedy, to have an affair. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord" (12:22). "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Or can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he that goes in to his neighbor's wife. Whoever touches her will not go unpunished" (6:27-28). "Sheol and death are never satisfied; neither are the eyes of man ever satisfied" (27:20). "Men of bloodshed hate the blameless. . ." (29:10). In everyday life one must not forsake the moral code of Yahweh, the giver of the Law. But this stage of wisdom takes these laws from the heights of Sinai down to the plains of Israel, from the loftiness and awesomeness of the burning Horeb to the common routine of 9 to 5.



*When you have built a solid foundation by following the ground rules, you are ready to tackle the more complex riddles of life.*

Beyond these social and moral guidelines Proverbs gives profound insights in life, insights specially esteemed among Mennonites. Wisdom is doctrine translated into praxis. "Do not say, 'I will repay evil.' Wait for the Lord, and he will save you" (20:22). It is wise not to retaliate; be longsuffering. "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but counselors of peace have joy" (12:20). It is wholesome to strive for peace. "Do not be anxious of evil men nor desire to be with them. For their minds devise violence and their lips talk of trouble." Proverbs gives clear warnings against violence and bloodshed, and calls to be separated from evil. "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is his delight" (11:1). To be true, honest and transparent in motive makes the oath unnecessary. "What is desirable in a person is kindness" (19:22). The stress is on gentleness. "He who despises his neighbor sins, but happy is he who is gracious to the poor" (14:21). The call is to social justice. "He who tills the land will have plenty of bread" (28:19). Work is basic to life and service. "If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink" (25:21).

In calling this stage the first level we do not mean that it is but a steppingstone to greater forms of wisdom. To the contrary, this wisdom is foundational and, like the Proverbs imply, must be taught first to the youth. Life must be conquered in stages: First learn to live as wisely as possible during a normal day and then you will be ready to tackle the riddles of life. *Fifth in a series of wisdom literature articles*

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# Strasburg to Strasbourg—2

*Dorothy M. Harnish*

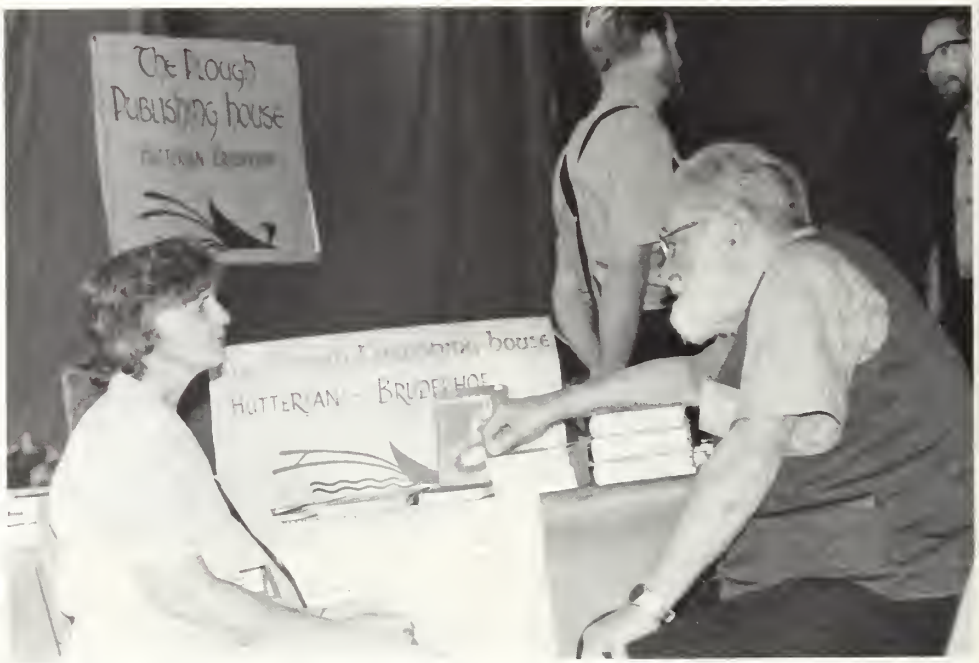
I went to Mennonite World Conference for a sensual experience that would be more than a rational "I've been there and here are the themes, the issues and the answers. I've been there and here are my pictures—see the Mennonite natives." I went to see, to hear and to feel. I don't have pictures to show, I don't know all the themes and issues, but I have seen and heard and felt, and I have gathered some stories as we walked and talked along the way.

It is significant that MWC XI was set in the context of historic Strasbourg Anabaptism, addressed by indigenous Anabaptism and being addressed by it in mutuality of vision and accountability. On the one hand some might wish to deny our history because it reminds us all too openly how far we've transgressed from our spiritual heritage. On the other hand, some might wish to hang onto the past, afraid of the ongoing drama of God at work in our midst, afraid of the new thing God wants to do in our midst. God would have us bring our one hand and the other hand together, along with our east and west, north and south and find our future as God's people and our meaning for the present as we immerse ourselves in the past, God's past.

After we arrived and got registered, some played the Mennonite game immediately, some looked bewildered, some of us were bewildered by the multiplicity of languages and some went immediately to the "banque." That evening a brass ensemble heralded us to worship, and I thought I was in another cathedral when the roll was called. I was lifted upward as people from Colombia, Taiwan, Japan, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, Canada, Nicaragua, the Soviet Union and many more came. Adults around me said with fervor, "That was impressive." Back in our dorm, the kids pronounced it "awesome."

We sang in many languages, "Join hands then people of the faith, whate'er your race may be/ Who serves a father as a child/ is surely kin to me." Amid the translating, did anyone hear yet another translation? If we hadn't noticed before, we now became aware of our pale complexion as a body of God's people.

In our discussion group Keith Schrag encouraged us to share what we had said "ja" or "si" or "oui" or "hallelujah" to in the message. And there I met Anna Leichty. At lunch she shared her story. "I think I left Zaire for the last time on Monday. There is a sense in which I am not happy about leaving Zaire, but I think the time has come." A teacher there for 38 years, Anna most recently taught in the Bible institutes. She shared this concern for the Mennonite churches there and elsewhere, "People must be nurtured toward maturity in the Christian faith."




*Dorothy Harnish, left, speaks with Hans Meier, who was at MWC XI on behalf of the Hutterian Bruderhof's Plough Publishing House.*

Charles and Susie Good also came from Strasburg to Strasbourg. A former pastor in my Strasburg, Pa., congregation, Charles brought a wall hanging to present to the Mennonite congregation in Strasbourg. I could hear again Charles' prayer every Sunday for the youth of the church. Those prayers linger in my memory. From Strasburg to Strasbourg they have led me. "Charles," I asked, "what are some feelings you have about being here at MWC?" "I'm impressed with the spirit of the meeting," he answered. "MWC is important because it unites us in concern and thought. The church here in Europe, like the church at home, needs encouragement. We have a story to tell, not just to preach it but to live it. Our fathers told the story well."

Our native Indian sisters and brothers were also telling a story. They shared their indigenous Anabaptist chants. They told us their problems. Elijah McKay of Winnipeg said, "I am at MWC to rejoice with you. When I get to heaven I first want to meet Christ who died for me. Second, I want to meet the people who brought the gospel to our people. We have now begun to recognize that the white missionaries are not here to stay the rest of our lives to serve us. We as a native people must take over these programs. We want to assume you will always be our brothers and sisters. We will walk hand in hand, we will sing songs together. We will make the joint effort. We will never be totally independent."

Friday began with breakfast with Aletha Stahl, 16, a former student of mine who spent the last year in a small town in France, living with a Mennonite family and going to a public high school as an exchange student. She was one of 500 purple-scarved European youth who served the conference in many ways. She said of MWC, "The European Mennonites are concerned about MWC

being North American centered. They worked hard to include everybody on the program, using English-speaking non-North Americans to animate the morning and evening sessions.

Felix Baah wore a blue hat and helped park cars at the gate. He is from Ghana and a member of the Presbyterian church. During this year as a university student he attended the Mennonite church. I asked, "What are your impressions of the people here at this conference?" "They are busy people," he responded, "regulated by their watches. They respect time." "Have many people stopped to talk with you?" I inquired. "No," he responded.

Nozumi Yamada, a University of Tübingen student from Hiroshima, Japan, was eager to converse in German. For my sake he switched easily to English. He was leading a group of Japanese Mennonites on a tour to the Anabaptist sites in Europe. "What do you like best about MWC?" I asked. "The whole thing," he responded quickly. "I am happy to communicate with Mennonites of other cultures. My church is very small. I couldn't imagine so many Mennonites from so many places." He loved the multiplicity of languages. "We have many cultures and languages but the same beliefs. This is my joy."

There is yet a story within a story. I met a man who has attended all the MWCs except the first two. Jan Gleysteen, Haarlam, the Netherlands, is 89 and affectionately known as Papa Gleysteen. I asked him, "What are the memories you have of past conferences and now this one?" "Oh," he said, "there are many, many more people. . . . I've never seen so many Mennonites together."

Behind the Plough Publishing Company booth I met another part of Papa Gleysteen's story. Hans Meier is 82 and came to MWC from the Deerspring Hutterite Community in Connecticut. His journey goes back to Switzerland, where he was born. He grew up in the Swiss Reformed Church, went to university and became an engineer. Then Hitler's Germany came. Though he was not a believer in Jesus Christ, he could not participate in war. He resisted, unlike many European Mennonites. The army called him crazy. His father lamented, "All those francs spent to put you through university and now you do this." He joined the German youth movement and eventually a community was formed. It lasted three years. In 1934 he was sent by the community to the peace people in Holland—the Mennonites—to try to find assistance in how to live in Germany with the question What is truth?

That 1934 day while Jan Gleysteen and Hans Meier talked in the kitchen of the Amsterdam home of the Gleysteens, there was a little Dutch boy under the kitchen table listening to the conversation. When the visitor had left and the little boy came out from under the table, his father said, "Jan, this man's children and other German children had to leave their homes and they have no toys. Would you like to give them one of your toys to play with?" Jan went and got one of his toys. Then the father said, "Is that your favorite toy?" It wasn't. So Jan went and got his favorite toy to give to the German children who had no toys. That young Jan Gleysteen today lives in Scottdale, Pa., and works for the Mennonite Publishing House. He was also present at Strasbourg.

Mennonite World Conference brought together these three men. It brought me from Strasburg to Strasbourg. It brought all of us from somewhere on our journey to journey together for a little while—in fellowship, in burden bearing, in renewed vision, in confrontation, in hope. *Second of two articles on MWC XI*

*Charles and Susie Good brought a wall hanging from the Mennonites of Strasburg, Pa., to the Mennonite congregation at Strasbourg, France.*

*The children at MWC XI presented a program built around the theme "Tree of Life."*

*Dorothy M. Harnish, Route 2, Box 100, Strasburg, PA 17579, is a free-lance writer.*

## Pontius' Puddle

# NEWS

## Deadline for 'Dialogue on Faith' approaches

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Members of General Conference churches in the United States and Canada hoping to attend "Dialogue on Faith" at Camp Lake, Wis., Oct. 26-28, should register by Sept. 30, according to Vern Preheim, the conference's general secretary.

Preheim reports that as of Sept. 7, 110 people had registered for the three-day consultation, intended to "promote mutual listening and understanding across the theological spectrum of the General Conference."

The facilities which the conference has reserved for the event will accommodate a maximum of 450 people, but only 275 beds have been reserved. Registrations between now and the end of September will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Advance registration is necessary.

Ken Bauman, pastor of First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind., and Joyce Shutt, pastor of Fairfield (Pa.) Mennonite Church, will speak at the consultation's opening session. Other major speakers will include Helmut Harder, Ted VanderEnde, James Juhnke, Ben Sprunger and Jake Pauls.

Planners of the meetings identified their overarching goal as being "to allow the unity of the Spirit to hold us together while we open dialogue on diverse interpretations in discerning biblical truth and practice."

To achieve that objective, meetings will be designed "(1) to actively hear and understand each other without the need to resolve all potentially divisive issues at this time, (2) to clarify the meaning of being Anabaptist within our complex society and (3) to use dialogue, prayer, worship, learning and fellowship as a means of hearing what the Spirit and the Word have to say to us today."

*Major speakers include (from left): Ken Bauman, Joyce Shutt, Helmut Harder, Ted VanderEnde, James Juhnke and Ben Sprunger.*

Discussion will revolve around three main themes: biblical interpretation, authority issues and Anabaptism for today.

People who have not yet registered but wish to do so should write to the General Secretary's Office, General Conference Mennonite Church, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, or telephone (316) 283-5100 as soon as possible.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Mennonite Mutual Aid

**Operation Friendship,** which began as a clinic in a lower working class neighborhood in West Kingston, Jamaica, added a trade school in 1968 to help unskilled young adults who had not finished school. Steve Panning of East Lansing, Mich., recently returned from his three-year assignment with Mennonite Central Committee as woodworking instructor at Operation Friendship and reported that over 90 percent of his students found jobs through the school placement services. MCC began its involvement with the school in 1972 and is sending another teacher to take Panning's place.

*Steve Panning (center) and students at Operation Friendship woodwork training program work in the shop.*

**"Concerns About Dying:** Ethical and Religious Issues" is the focus of the National Interfaith Coalition on Aging's biennial conference, to be held Nov. 12-15 in Chicago. It is open "to all persons who are concerned about the spiritual well-being of older adults." For further information contact NICA, Miriam Peifer, Box 1924, Athens, GA 30603, (404) 353-1331.

# Regier named as children's education secretary

*Regier*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Rosella Wiens Regier will become secretary for children's education for the Commission on Education Oct. 1. For the past 10 years she has taught kindergarten and first and second grade in the Newton school system.

She has served a year on the Commission on Education board but will terminate when she takes the new job. In the past she has written Foundation Series courses and led workshops introducing it and other curriculae for COE. Currently she is revising the first and second grade FS courses.

While her husband, Harold, was pastor at the Walton (Kan.) Mennonite Church from 1981-1984, Regier actively worked in the small congregation. She helped plan the use of intergenerational Sunday school material which brought in people for a series of summer events.

She has held several offices in the Western District Conference since 1975: secretary, vice president and member of both the program and evaluation study committees.

She has had articles published in numerous Mennonite periodicals on teacher education, Christian living, programs for women and stories for children. Writing will be a part of her new work. For example, she will contribute to a column in *The Builder*.

Regier has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. She took some courses at Mennonite Biblical Seminary and has been working on a master's degree in education.

She is the mother of two teenagers: Steve, a college student, and Sharon, a high school student. Regier's husband is director of Interfaith Offender Concerns Committee in Newton.

## Stewards in Mission conference held

North Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—A Stewards in Mission conference was held Aug. 16-18 on the Bethel College campus in North Newton. Attending were people from 10 General Conference congregations. All had related to stewardship director Ray Frey and agreed to take part in a pilot program on stewardship.

Surprisingly, the conference had little on fund raising. Rather the leader, Paul M. Dietterich from the Center for Parish Development, focused on the Bible.

Stressing God's activity rather than his abstract being, Dietterich had the group think about God as creator, redeemer and empowerer.

He emphasized that the Holy Spirit could make plain new ideas heard in the sessions and how a participant could incorporate them in his or her life.

"The whole objective of the conference was to help people understand the basics and move into first steps which they planned," Frey said. "We need much prayer for the churches in the program because change does not come easily."

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Feb. 22-24—Salem, Ore.
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**The board of directors** of Columbia Bible Institute, Clearbrook, B.C., has completed a series of meetings in British Columbia churches of both the Mennonite Brethren and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada to present a progress report on the thinking and findings of the board concerning the future of CBI. The board later plans to select a site on which to build a new campus to expand the school's services.

**What if Christmas were a time when** . . . instead of spending over $20 billion buying gifts for family and friends who have no need of them we diverted our resources to those whose needs are great? Over the last four years, Alternatives, Box 429, 5263 Bouldercrest Road, Ellenwood, GA 30049, has worked in cooperation with a dozen denominations to provide resources annually for over 7,000 churches who want to say no to the commercialization of one of our holiest days. Alternatives offers two packets, "Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?" and "The Light Not Overcome by Darkness," and a filmstrip, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas."

**"Harvest Against Hunger"** is an appeal begun by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. to raise both food commodities and funds for MCC's 1984 food programs. The appeal is in part a response to special action at MCC's annual meeting, where MCC pledged response to problems of conflict, food scarcity and food access in Africa and renewed its wider commitment to addressing matters of world hunger. Commodity drives will be organized by MCC regional offices this fall for food needs in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kampuchea and El Salvador, which have all suffered from political violence, and the first three from drought.

# Brazilian volunteer works in Minneapolis

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Most volunteers in Mennonite Central Committee's U.S. Program are from North American Mennonite churches.

But Silvano Araujo, who has just completed a voluntary service assignment in Minneapolis, hails from Natal, Brazil.

Silvano was able to relate to people in the Phillips neighborhood of Minneapolis in a way that other VS workers were not, noted Glen Geissinger, coordinator of the MCC unit in Minneapolis.

From June 1983 until August 1984, Araujo worked as a social service worker at Community Emergency Service (CES), a church agency that helps American Indians, Cuban refugees, Southeast Asians, blacks and whites living in the Phillips neighborhood.

Most of the people there live below the federal poverty level, explained Geissinger. "Silvano befriended them, counseled them and affirmed their dignity, while providing them with (what they needed) to meet their crises."

CES provides emergency food, housing and transportation assistance, job development and placement assistance and counseling. With Araujo CES was also able to offer counseling, Bible studies and fellowship in Spanish.

"Silvano, the only staff member who could relate to the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking clients, brought a new dimension to the CES program," noted Geissinger. "He was especially grateful for the opportunity to begin and nurture the Spanish Bible study group."

Araujo's other responsibilities included controlling the inventory in the food shelf and supervising work assignments.

Araujo was not completely satisfied with what he was able to do. He still struggles to find answers to the question How can a white, middle-class organization with religious motivations work effectively with poor people to give them real hope?

Araujo wants to find a better way to reach poor people and work with them so that they are not totally dependent on charitable organizations such as CES.

"Both of these issues are being seriously addressed by the staff at CES at this time," noted Geissinger. "While Silvano was there, they caught a vision of making long-term changes in the Phillips neighborhood, rather than simply meeting short-term emergency needs."

Araujo's voluntary service assignment in Minneapolis was not his first contact with North America. In 1980 and 1981 he participated in MCC's International Visitor Exchange Program. Through this program he spent six months in Amarillo, Texas, as a teacher's aide in a community center.

## *Pastoral counseling seminar held in Japan*

Tokyo, Japan—The Eastern Hokkaido Bible School and the Tokyo Anabaptist Center sponsored a pastoral counseling seminar here Aug. 20-24. Twenty-seven students and five instructors participated in the seminar, including eight EHBS students and three pastors from Tokyo.

Kyohei Minaga, pastor of the United Church and professor at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, presented the essence of a course on the principles of pastoral counseling. Shuichi Kaku, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and professor at the Lutheran Seminary Counseling Center, spoke on transactional analysis and counseling the grieving and the dying. Then pastor Kazuo Ishikawa of the United Church presented a more practical application of counseling theory in role plays and group dynamics experiences.

The evening lecturers brought added variation from their experiences or current endeavors. Michio Ohno, pastor of the Mennonite group in Toke, told of his pilgrimage. He also made an appeal for a peace stance and the non-payment of military taxes. Susumu Obata of the Suginami Presbyterian Church lectured on Buddhism and the Japanese view of death. The final lecturer was Umeno Nishimura, who will retire next year from a long career of prison counseling. Her personal warmth and wisdom from long experience attracted the students.

*Students at pastoral counseling seminar*

Costs for the seminar were greater than anticipated. More students came from EHBS than were expected, and the mission board subsidies were less than had been hoped. EHBS upped its contribution, and the Anabaptist Center agreed to pick up the remainder of the costs. *Charles B. Shenk*


## Pastor needed

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# THE MENNONITE

## WM EDITION

## window TO MISSION

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 1984

# THE OPEN WINDOW

## TOUCHED BY HIS GOLD

Autumn's landscape lay like an
afghan of brown;
no colors appeared until
the sun started down.

There crocheted on the fringe
of the brushwood and trees
was an edging of gold
crafted to please.

Then God's hand added in
some tinges of flame,
henna, scarlet, magenta
and shades without name.

And I wondered if in
my autumn of days
I'd be touched by his gold
and shine forth with his praise!

— Helen C. Coon

### COVER

We, like these candles, come in assorted shapes, sizes, and ages. Regardless of where we are in our life's pilgrimage, we each have something special to share to make our world a better, brighter place to live. May God's light shine through us.

WM

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# WOMEN LOOK AT AGING

**Ruth Naylor**

I AM NOT CERTAIN that women "think" a great deal about aging. Recently a close friend who lives in another state mentioned that one of her circles of friends enjoys celebrating fiftieth birthdays and twenty-fifth wedding anniversaries together.

Those numbers caught in my brain. Fiftieth birthday!!?? "Goodness," I thought, "they must have really old friends!" Then I tried to think of how old I'd be this year. . . . How could it be? *I* am going to be fifty. That *sounds* old, but I surely don't *feel* old.

On the other hand, I do find myself much stiffer when I get out of bed in the morning; it takes a while to loosen up. But I generally refuse to think about it, and by 10:00 a.m. I am feeling as active as ever.

To be very honest, I have been feeling the restlessness that author Gail Sheehy suggests is typical of a mid-life passage. Our house is disturbingly quiet since our children have both gone, and there is a new "not satisfying enough" quality to my job of teaching high school English. For at least ten of my thirteen teaching years the job seemed perfect for me.

Recently the problem has been to understand the tears that accompany weekends. Could they be a sign of menopause? Or are they telling me something more significant?

My doctor, a member of our church, focuses on "wellness," and he speaks to me of reducing tension, of getting more exercise, of eating less white flour and sugar and more natural foods. He even prescribed highly increased quantities of natural vitamins.

In preparation for writing this article I decided to have a small group in for a luncheon. My husband helped to make up the guest list of women who would add unique dimensions to our discussion. Again we forgot to focus on "age" and we soon had a much longer list than I could use—all fifty or older! Perhaps subconsciously we thought that if we were to discuss aging, we would need to get people who knew something about it. So I made up another list.

I called a neighbor who lives somewhere on the bridge between her thirties and forties, and told her what I wanted. When I mentioned that the subject was to be "aging," she chirped confidently, "Oh yes. Well, I guess I'd have something to say about that. I have a great-aunt that we've recently been trying to get settled in a home, and we are aware of the problems surrounding that sort of decision."

I smiled inside. I'm not the only one who thinks of others instead of myself when the subject is "aging."

Do you realize how *young* thirty-year-olds are these days? It ended up that one of my guests had *actually* been the flower girl in my wedding. Just a child! But she came to the luncheon very pregnant with her second child.

And what does *she* think about these days? About nutrition and good prenatal care. She doesn't worry about being pregnant in her thirties because her mother gave birth to a healthy seventh child when she was in her forties.

Another guest in her thirties is a public school teacher and wife of a college professor. Having also been from a large family, she hopes people will understand if she and her husband decide to settle for just one child. She can't imagine having two and still maintaining her career, which she obviously finds quite satisfying.

The challenges of homemaking and parenting would become too demanding to also meet the needs of all her children at school. "If and when we decide to have other children, the issue will not be *my age*, but rather the number of years between the children. I would like to have four or five years between them," she said.

The counselor in our luncheon group asked how we feel about our lives as compared with the lives our mothers lived. Most felt we have enjoyed more freedom and opportunity than our mothers had, and we are therefore happy; we feel no nostalgia for the "good old days."

The youngest in our group said that she isn't sure that she has been able to achieve more than her mother did. "Frankly, I really admire Mom. She did more while raising her large family than I was able to accomplish as I was working toward a degree," she said.

We discussed the freedom, or the lack of it, that we have to move around as job opportunities present themselves to either man or woman.

As we grow older, we are much more heavily burdened with an accumulation of material things. One of our group had spent some years in Africa, and she pointed out that there doesn't seem to be that sort of material accumulation there which can often hinder our readiness to make significant moves.

Of course we discussed the obvious issues of women's aging—menopause, middle-age-spread, and gray hair. We discovered that the physical symptoms of menopause among us were varied. Regarding the other bodily changes, one commented, "I wonder if *Mennonite* women think about that as much as others because of our emphasis upon simplicity and inner beauty." We never really got that resolved.

We did acknowledge the fear that would accompany physical conditions that were "out of control" like that of a young athlete coach in our community whose life is being totally changed by leukemia.

One of our group also has rheumatoid arthritis. "I just wonder how I'll cope if I finally come to the place where I cannot care for myself," she said.

All of us agreed that as we grow older, we need to develop more recognition and acceptance of things that we cannot change. In situations where mistakes have been made or where choices are being made which are not ours to control, we discover that we must let go and realize that we cannot be responsible for changing the whole world. All of us were old enough to have lost some of the idealism of our younger years.

Several spoke of prayer as being an important component of finding not only direction in difficult situations, but also peace when things are not as we would like them to be.

Not one of us was ready to change places with anyone else. Life is good as it comes to us, even when it is bad for a time. It offers us the opportunity to grow and develop wisdom.

# WAITING...

Don Kraybill

INFANTS WAIT to have their diapers changed. They wait for a new bottle. They can't wait to learn the ABCs. They eagerly wait for their own birthday party. They wait for their first haircut, their visit to the dentist's chair. They wait and wait to read.

In the morning they wait for the school bus. They wait till Mommy's not so busy. They just can't wait for their Christmas gift. They wait for Saturday. They have to wait until Daddy comes home. They can't wait until their seeds pop out of the ground. And for almost everything they really want to do they just have to wait and wait until they're "big enough." Nobody clearly defines when "big enough" will come, so they wait and wait and wait.

And growing old means even more waiting. There's a first date to wait for, the driver's license, a diploma. Most of all, summer vacations are eagerly awaited. Some wait to get married and then wait to see what their first child will look like. Then it's time to wait for a career and time to discover true personal identity.

Life is like a seesaw. In the early years the focus is on the future, waiting for it to unfold. In midlife the seesaw balances, and waiting declines. Oh, there are still traffic jams and waits for trains and planes and mail. But the waiting for big things is over. At least the waiting for the things we have personal control over slows down. We have a career identity. We know our spouse. We have a sense of our place in life. We know who we are.

In this lull we begin to wait for others. Now we wait to see how our kids turn out. We wait to see how the family inheritance goes around. We wait to see how the business does. We wait to see the successful achievements of our friends. And as always, we wait for new years.

In a few brief years the seesaw tips again. This time the "past" takes over and the mind focuses on bygone things. Retelling stories of the past takes over the incessant daydreaming of youth. But even as the "past" takes over, a new kind of waiting sets in. We wait for retirement and for social security. Will it be enough? Where will we live in those years? We wait to see how well we'll be treated toward the end. Will we still be worthy? We wait for our friends to die and for a great-grandchild. But mostly we wait for death. We wait for the eternal home. We wait for the faithful servant's welcome home. We wait to hear the blessing on our life.

So life consists of waiting—incessant waiting in our youth, moderate waiting in middle age, and a crescendo of waiting at old age. The paradox is that in our youth, when we must do the most waiting, we haven't really learned to wait. By the time we've learned the art, middle age has arrived and we have little to wait on. But the art of waiting comes in handy for that final wait, the most difficult one of all.

# THE CONNECTION

**Juliette Kuitse**

*Juliette Kuitse comes from the Netherlands. She and her husband, Roelf, are living in Goshen, Indiana, where she is studying at Goshen College.*

*She has served as a nurse in Vietnam under MCC. She comments "When I married,* I *promised to follow* my husband *(except for a stay in Alaska with its whalemeat dinners in igloos)." Roelf was a missionary in Indonesia at the time. Later, as a couple, they served in Ghana, West Africa, for several years, where their second son and their daughter were born.*

WHEN I REFLECT on my overseas experiences as housewife, I wish that I had received more guidance concerning my role and the unique opportunities my role has to offer.

It is true that single persons have special opportunities. Single persons may be invited into nationals' homes for a meal more easily than a family would be. Also, single persons have the best chance of learning the local culture and language very quickly, because they are not speaking their first language with a spouse. They, however, are often tied down by a specific job description and a regular work schedule.

In contrast, a woman in the role of homemaker has many advantages. She shares with the women of the community the roles of cook, mother, and homebuilder. She easily can build relationships with the market women, as quickly as her language skills develop. She may also need to rely on local women to learn how to prepare local foods. Just as she may wish to learn the indigenous lifestyle from her neighbors, they are observing the different pattern of raising children and family life of the foreigner.

For instance, as a mother relating to other mothers, I was able to tell about the porridge and bananas I fed my baby and the importance of fluids for measles and diarrhea patients.

Since I was a housewife, I had a flexible schedule, no binding job description. For example, I had a Sunday school group under a tree in the village. People could come and listen without having to admit their interest.

There were no expectations of performance or activity reports to be submitted. Just as it does not occur to me to count the number and quality of laundered garments, I did not keep track of the number and type of encounters I had with local women.

Thus in a very relaxed, unofficial way, I could give my attention to any person who happened to cross my path. In my early experiences *I did not fully realize the immense opportunities for sharing my beliefs that went along with my role as a homemaker.* In the early days of mission, only men, especially in cases of couples, seemed to count as the "real" missionaries.

One has to wonder whether the role of homemaker will ever be recognized as suitable credentials for a woman to be sent out as a church planting missonary, followed by her supporting husband.

PROGRAM 2

Martha Graber

# WELLNESS AND AGING A CONCERN FOR ALL

HOW DO WE LIVE out our experience of God's love as we continue aging in our middle years? Perhaps our children have left home. We may have aging parents and grandchildren who need us. We may ourselves be in the midst of changing life situations.

## Changes

How rapidly time goes by. What tremendous changes have taken place in our world.

Fifty years ago relatively few North Americans lived to age sixty-five. Now three out of four males and four out of five females born in this country live to be sixty-five, while nearly half the population will live to be more than seventy-five years of age. The over eighty-five group is the fastest growing group in the country.

One-sixth of the people in our churches are now over sixty-five, one-third are over fifty, and nearly one-twelfth are over seventy-five.

A special word about women: older women are disproportionately poor with about 18 percent below the poverty line, but 36 percent of single women are poor.

Almost two-thirds of women over sixty-five are single; widows outnumber widowers five to one, and 60 percent of older women rely on Social Security as their only income in the United States.

While one-third of men aged fifty-six through sixty-four are retiring early, there has been a dramatic rise in the number of older women who have entered the labor force in the last three decades. Employment opportunities are less available after age sixty-five, especially for women who may need the income most.

These serious economic questions along with decreased stability in family life make it imperative for women to recognize the likelihood that they will outlive their husbands. Male life expectancy is now seventy years and nine months while women's is seventy-eight years and three months.

Women need to learn much more about financial planning and anticipate the need for retirement income. They must also realize the dilemma of many women in their sixties who are the primary contact for aged parents, and possibly the main support, while also having to assist a younger generation to become established and care for grandchildren, facing many difficult challenges.

## Health and wellness

Health has been vastly improved and continues to improve. Where formerly infectious diseases claimed many lives, accidents are now the number one cause of death for those under age forty-five. As people live longer, heart disease, cancer, and strokes become leading causes of death.

Lifestyle has a significant impact on health and has contributed to the declin-

ing death rates from heart disease and strokes, though cancer deaths have been rising. With increasing awareness of the importance of lifestyle, wellness has become a key concept in a positive approach to health and environment, with a goal of wholeness in Christian living and personal health.

Many Mennonite communities are being introduced to the Congregational Wellness program advocated by Ann Raber of Mennonite Mutual Aid. Their manual by John Bender gives a series of definitions as suggestions for study in search of the fullest possible life and health to achieve the best God has intended, even though one may be ill or disabled.

He suggests that we need to experience inner peace and harmony, express our emotions, build and keep healthy relationships, learn to know our body's needs, rhythms, and signals, and keep faith in God central in our relationships, in addition to a number of other good life and health suggestions.

**One-sixth of the people in our churches are now over sixty-five, one-third are over fifty, and nearly one-twelfth are over seventy-five.**

Bender stresses that wellness is a choice we can make. What a challenge this concept of wellness is. This abundant living introduces us to activities promoting spiritual, mental and emotional well-being, as well as activities that promote physical wellness, such as exercise, nutrition, and environmental protection. As we are aging, we can be living longer and living better.

**Physical well-being**

Physical well-being is important to make possible a lifestyle of service. According to the Traveler's Insurance Company, regular exercise can change a senior's level of fitness to that of a person ten to twenty years younger.

No matter at what age you begin, or for how long you may have been inactive, exercise will always improve your physical condition. Programs can be designed to improve flexibility, strength, and endurance, starting slowly and building up gradually.

Good nutrition and a balanced diet are also essential to enhance well-being and prevent major disease. Together with exercise, the reduction in calories can help with weight control.

Eat smaller portions and less sugar and fat. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain cereals. Milk and milk products add bone strength. Substitute other seasonings for salt. Substitute fish or fowl for red meats. Avoid smoking. Drink plenty of water, but little coffee, tea, soft drinks, or alcoholic beverages. Eat regular meals. Ask your doctor about interaction of foods and drugs, using only essential medicines, and being alert to watch for side effects. We can be an example to youth of wholesome living by avoiding unnecessary use of drugs and medicine.

Learning to use relaxation, meditation, self-acceptance, forgiveness of others, and healing of memories can help with stress control. Group support is important in all of these lifestyle changes.

Social and emotional wholeness is assisted by accepting limitations, redefining roles in the community and fellowship groups, by nurturing creativity, and by finding a place of service and ministry that gives meaning to life.

**Discovery of meaning**

Dr. W. Paul Jones, faculty person at Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, sees the quickly growing "elders culture" as possibly having an even more powerful influence on American lifestyle than did the youth

**Youth is not entirely a time of life—it is a state of mind. It is not wholly a matter of ripe cheeks, red lips, or supple knees. It is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of emotions. Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years. People grow old by deserting their ideals. You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair. In a central place of every heart, there is a recording chamber; so long as it receives of beauty, hope, cheer, and courage, so long are you young. When the wires are all down and your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then, and only then, are you grown old! —Douglas MacArthur on his seventy-fifth birthday**

culture of the 1960s.

He sees growing contrasts between the value of contemporary America and a lifestyle which he feels is increasingly characteristic of many elders. For example, they are moving from "doing" to "being," from "profit" to "service," from "aggressiveness" to "cooperation."

As elders discover meaning through remembering the past, accepting, forgiving, making peace with it, thereby changing the present, every moment of life becomes a gift.

**Grandparenting**

With their experience of life itself as a gift, aging persons have much to offer the young. Grandparenting beyond one's own family, with all children needing love, perhaps with abused or neglected children, provides opportunities to share these gifts.

Charles A. Smith suggests that the ten best gifts for grandparents to give to grandchildren are: the gift of self-worth; the gift of example; the gift of caring; the gift of growing older gracefully; the gift of knowledge; the gift of change (memories of historic changes one has experienced); the gift of heritage; the gift of hope; the gift of happy memories; and the gift of love and acceptance.

**Spiritual maturity**

These gifts are possible through spiritual growth toward maturity and well-being. Persons spend one-fourth of their lives growing up and three-fourths growing old. Older persons are the unique bearers of culture, truth, wisdom, and tradition. Spiritual growth requires a right attitude: to live until you die.

In mid-life persons encounter the problem of their own mortality—a knowledge that there are limitations to life, that they are expendable. One begins to question what can be done with the time remaining.

Three crucial factors influence older people to remain bright and alert: remaining socially involved with others; maintaining a flexible personality to see things from different viewpoints; and keeping mentally active with a desire to learn. Drawing on this resource older persons can become better at making judgments and solving problems. They can draw upon the many facets of information acquired over the years to make decisions and choose alternatives.

One choice is to accept a world that is both evil and good without losing a commitment to making it a more humane place for all. Instead of retiring to the edges of life, older people may move back to the center where decisions are made about war and peace, hunger, human rights, race, sex, and aging. They can be powerful sources of healing in a sick society because they

can speak without fear, having less to lose.

To encourage this, our churches and elders must change the attitude that elders have served enough and are entitled to retire from social commitment. At the 1981 White House Conference on Aging, Arthur Flemming criticized the churches, saying, "Our mission is to break older people out of that self-centered attitude . . . They have just as much obligation to serve their fellow human beings as they had at any other stage in life . . . The older person has the obligation to serve others right down to the day of his or her death."

Spiritual well-being in aging calls for the courage to live with love, facing not only personal limitations but also social networks of oppression, entering the life enhancing struggle to better the lot of others. A person of mature faith has not a stoic resignation to aging, but a firm hope in the power of God to give courage and insight to serve humanity to the end of life.

## PROGRAM "HOW-TO" IDEAS

1. For your devotions, use the material suggested for Program 2 in the 1984-85 Devotional/Resource Packet which is available from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, for $2.

2. Some Bible passages for consideration are: Deuteronomy 32:7, 11; Joshua 14:10-12; Job 12:12, 13; Job 32:6-10; Psalm 90:10, 12; 91:16; 92:12-15; and Isaiah 40:31.

3. Give each person a sheet of paper, or use a chalkboard. Divide the space into four sections and fill in the ages and important tasks for each section, as you see them. Label the sections: Young Adults—Preparing for Career; Middle-Agers—Evaluating Career; Young-Olds—Preparing for Retirement; Old-Olds—Enjoying Retirement.

4. Discuss views of the passage of time. How important is time spent on the job? in the home? with family? in church and community? When or where do you feel anxious about the passage of time? Why?

5. Discuss retirement dreams. List goals to achieve objectives for retirement in the areas of health, income, and activities. For each goal list steps you need to take now to accomplish these goals.

6. Write down persons in your life who fill your needs for social activities, who make you feel worthwhile or competent, who look to you for nurture or support, to whom you go for practical help, with whom you share intimate thoughts and concerns. Are there areas in which you need to expand your relationships?

7. Make a lifeline of your birth date, when you expect to die, and where you are now. What do you want to do with the rest of your life? Where will you live? Write your obituary, telling what you have done, and maybe hope to have done.

8. Two resources for program helps are: *Christian Living* magazine, March/April 1983, from Mennonite Publishing House, Scottdale, Pa.; *In Favor of Growing Older* by Tilman Smith, Herald Press 1981.

# slice of life

**Jeannie Zehr**

"WOULD IT HELP if you held my hand as we ride down the escalator?" I asked. Her little, blond head turned upward as her tear-filled eyes checked out the stranger who offered a helping hand.

Nodding, she placed her wee hand in mine as we stepped together onto the moving stairs. At the bottom her embarrassed, frustrated mother smiled, took her child in tow and murmured, "Thanks!"

After a congregational dinner I encountered a trio of children running down the hallway leaving a cookie-crumb trail behind.

"Hey, kids, no food in the hallway," I stated.

Seated around the family campfire a restless five-year-old left his mother. He scavenged around the fire for bits of wood and paper to toss into the low flames. Flames leaped upward with each treasure he added from his position just inches away from the fire logs. Fear tugged at my innards. The campfire storyteller read on.

His mother watched from a distance, but only shook her head, unnoticed by him. I wanted to rise and return him to her side, but—the "fine line" was there.

Lord, we're all part of your intergenerational family. Help me to know when and how to cross the "fine line" to act and speak in love and concern.

LIFE

# Changed at Forty

Marge Nester

FROM THE TIME our first child was born until the time our fourth and youngest child went to kindergarten fifteen years later, I was a full-time mother and homemaker. Even though there were many struggles during those years I felt content with those roles while the children were small.

As our two older boys neared their high school years, my husband and I often discussed the need for a second income to finance their college education. I thought about many ways I might earn money, but came to feel ill-equipped to earn without further training. The thought of reentering the classroom was exciting but very scary.

With the encouragement of many in my church family, some of whom were "older" students themselves, I took a chemistry course. This was to be a trial run to see if I could still compete in the strange world of academics. Feeling accepted and being successful in that course was enough to build my confidence for bigger things.

So the day I turned forty, I took my last child to his first day of first grade and started classes at Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing. Any of these events by itself is stressful. Sometimes I wonder how I survived all three on the same day.

During the next three years I had times when I wondered if I had made the right decision. I had guilt feelings when I couldn't be the wife, mother, or church member I wanted to be. I felt frustration with a lower grade I had gotten because I "mothered" rather than studied the night before an exam.

My tired mind and body often envied my younger and single classmates who could relax or nap after classes when I faced meal preparation, laundry, school concerts, or some other family activity. Studying was often done during the late or early hours of the day when I really longed to rest.

But the struggles during those years were overshadowed with many joys. It was exciting to learn and experience so many new things. My forty years of experience proved to be an asset in the classroom. It felt good to be accepted by my younger classmates as someone with whom and from whom they could learn. The support and affirmation I received from teachers, family, and friends made me want to try harder.

After graduation I began work at Mennonite Hospital. I continue to learn, to have struggles, but to have many joys. How thankful I am for those who encouraged me to return to the classroom. Without their support, I might not have gained a lifelong dream.

## CONSIDER READING

*Wellness Series* (10 brochures) by Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA).

In 1900 our life expectancy was forty-seven years. Today it is seventy-four years and rising. We can rejoice that medical knowledge has given us longer lives. But have the added years made our lives better? fuller? richer?

Mennonite Mutual Aid joins with many others in saying our lives are much better than eighty years ago . . . but they can be even better. Along with changes in the length of our lives, we've had changes in the style of our lives. We now have more sedentary jobs, more stress and conflict, more sugar, fats, and sodium in our diets, and less exercise. All of these patterns make lifestyle illnesses now the major causes of death.

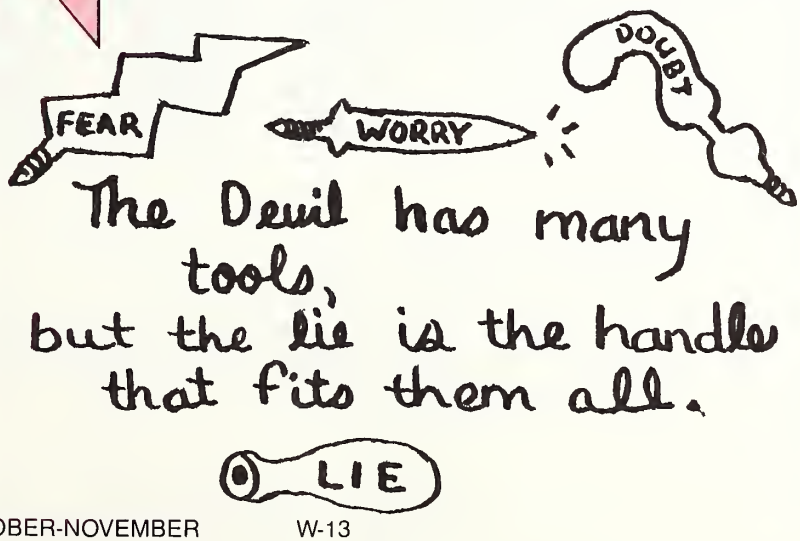
The *Wellness Series* of MMA addresses these lifestyle concerns. The first of the ten brochures is an introduction. Each of the following nine brochures focuses on a specific dimension of wellness. They provide background information, tools for self-evaluation, and suggestions of practical steps for action. The series can be a helpful, basic introduction to learning about wellness and working toward a healthier lifestyle.

One of the special elements of the series is MMA's effort to shape it for Mennonite readers. MMA has developed this series to fit the unique concerns and beliefs of Mennonites. For example, the series concludes with a brochure on spiritual wellness, a dimension often neglected in wellness materials from other sources.

If interested, contact MMA for copies of the entire series or specific brochures: Wellness; Fitness; Living with Stress; Exercise; Eating for Health; Environment; Mental Health; Relationships; Coping with Life; and Spiritually Well. Information about MMA's Wellness Program is also available.

Write or call: Wellness Program, Mennonite Mutual Aid, P.O. Box 483, Goshen, IN 46526, or call the toll-free number 800-348-7468, or in Indiana call collect (219) 533-9511.

— Ann Raber



# WM office jottings from Joan

### Women Celebrate at Mennonite World Conference

Pages could be written about the MWC experience at Strasbourg in July. Here is only a "slice."

Women who attended the four afternoon sessions at the Women's Resource Center were delighted with the programs planned by women from the four European host groups—the German, Swiss, Dutch, and French.

The format for the sessions included unique activities beautifully and creatively planned with music, speeches, group singing, banner making, drama, pantomime, and much more. Flowers and visual aids added to the festivity. Refreshments consisting of delicacies distinctive to the individual countries were served each afternoon. Translators helped facilitate understanding. Special mementos were given to each woman present. It was a rich experience in international sharing and community!

### Editor Resigns

Jeannie Zehr, who for over nine years has capably and creatively edited *Window to Mission* magazine has tendered her resignation, effective December 1, 1984. Jeannie leaves this post to become the secretary for Mission Communications for the Commission on Overseas Mission at the General Conference headquarters in Newton. The Zehrs plan to move to Kansas January 1.

The new editor of *Window to Mission* will be Lois Deckert, from North Newton, Kansas. Lois comes as no stranger to WM circles. She has served in various capacities for WM, including the office of vice-president and WM representative to the Commission on Education. Her gifts in writing, speaking, and illustrating will be well utilized in this position. Thank you, Jeannie, for a job well done! Welcome, Lois, to a new challenge!

### Secretary for Children's Education Hired

We'd like to call attention to a new item in the budget this year which will be a project needing special support from everyone. This is in reference to the secretary for Children's Education. Many of you will have noticed this as a line item in the financial goals section on page W-14 in the August-September issue. Contributions for this project will provide salary for a much needed full-time staff person, working under the Commission on Education, who will work with the Christian nurture of children. COE has just recently announced that Rosella Regier, public school teacher and Foundation Series curriculum writer, will serve in this capacity.

Each member contributing $1.50 per year will make possible this important ministry to the children in our conference.

## contributors

**Helen C. Coon** (The Open Window—Touched by his Gold) and her pastor husband, Robert, live in Deer Creek, Oklahoma. Helen is a Bluffton College graduate and enjoys doing free-lance writing. Helen and Bob have three children.

**Ruth Naylor** (Women Look at Aging) was raised in a Quaker home and community and first met Mennonites at Bluffton College where she and her future husband, Stan, were both students. She resigned last spring from her high school teaching job to explore new avenues. She has written for *Rejoice*, *The Mennonite*, *Christian Living*, and *With* magazines. She is a member of First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

**Martha F. Graber** (Program 2: Wellness and Aging—a Concern for All) is director of the Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, and is engaged in collecting and sharing resources on aging from her office at 722 Main, Newton, Kansas. Her husband, Eldon W. Graber, shared this job with her in its first year until his death in March 1983. They have five children, ages twenty to forty-three and spread from coast to coast. Martha is a member of the Bethel College Church and has been active in education and women's work in the church and conference.

**Jeannie Zehr** (Slice of Life) edits *Window to Mission* from her home at 4226 Maplecrest Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana. She also works as director of Maplewood Nursery School. She and her pastor husband, Marv, are the parents of two college-age children.

**Marge Nester** (Life Changed at Forty) and her husband, Don, are the parents of four children. She is a member of Normal Mennonite Church, Normal, Illinois. She is a registered nurse working on a medical unit at Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington, Illinois. She enjoys following her children's activities, walking, reading, and "coffeeing" with her friends. Among other activities at the church, she and her husband serve as youth sponsors.

**Ann Raber** (Consider Reading) has been a teacher most of her life, primarily in the field of psychology. From 1975-1982 she worked in administration of a Maternal and Child Health Clinic in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She has been a counselor working particularly with women. She joined the MMA Wellness effort in early 1983.

## credits

PHOTO: Cover, Religious News Service.
ARTWORK: P. 3, Cheryl Rempel; p. 13, Naomi Epp.
ARTICLE: "Waiting . . ." reprinted with permission. The article originally appeared in *Christian Living* magazine in January, 1978, in the author's column, "Nuts and Bolts."

Helen C. Coon

Ruth Naylor

Martha F. Graber

Marge Nester

Ann Raber

## forecast

We here in North America are not isolated in our own world anymore. Our horizons have broadened to include our neighbors on every continent around the globe. The December-January issue of *Window to Mission* will open some windows to the lives of women around the world as we focus on "Women in China" and also visit Crete and Africa.

Printed in U.S.A.

# bright ideas

MOST GROUPS at one time or another have held a progressive dinner. Some have done this at Christmastime when homes are festively decorated for the holidays.

The East Swamp Church, Quakertown, Pennsylvania, women have given the event special meaning by having the evening's theme be "Open Heart, Open Home." The group moved from home to home to enjoy a simple menu of soup, salad, main dish, and so forth. At the home where the main course was served, a speaker shared with the guests about homes and hospitality in India.

Another idea to try would be to have each course include tips or sharing on building Christian homes and families.

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If your Women in Mission group is interested in having a program on world citizenship, you will want to write to Mennonite Central Committee U.S., 21 South 12 Street, Akron, PA 17501, to obtain a copy of their annotated bibliography, "Resources on World Hunger, Responsible Living and Other Global Issues." It is an eleven-page compilation of books, audiovisuals, study guides, periodicals, and other resources.

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Women in Lombard, Illinois, held a "Have a Heart" meeting in February. This included a dinner which was low-sodium, low cholesterol, and low-sugar. This is an excellent way to share recipes for those on restrictive diets, and to help others become more conscious of good eating habits and tasty ways to eat right.

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How does your local WM group keep your congregation—men, women, and youth—informed about all it is involved in and doing? Some groups mimeograph or photocopy monthly or quarterly bulletin inserts. As more and more of our congregations have mailboxes in the church, maybe you will want to consider this method of distributing periodic news tidbits.

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Has your WM group ordered a copy of the 1984-85 Devotional/Resource Packet? The cost is $2 and it is available from the WM Office, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114. In the packet are devotionals on the various programs written in *Window to Mission*, plus additional mission and Bible study programs.

Even if your WM group does not use the programs as printed in *Window to Mission*, these packets are excellent resources for your group for devotional ideas. Also available from the WM Office are last year's packets. These cost $1.

**Four Nobel Laureates** led an international delegation on the "Ship for Peace," which presented almost $4 million in humanitarian aid from the governments of Norway and Sweden to the people of Nicaragua in July. The cargo included $3 million in medical supplies, fertilizer and educational materials for children donated by the Norwegian government. Twenty-two Norwegian newspapers and the Church of Norway donated paper stock for the Nicaraguan press, and the Swedish government donated paper for voting slips for the Nov. 4 Nicaraguan election. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Adolfo Perez Esquivel of Argentina led the delegation.

**The St. Louis Mennonite Fellowship** Sunday school recently marked the end of a fund-raising project for the children of Nicaragua entitled "Playgrounds, not Battlegrounds" by presenting an oversized check for $185.33 to the project's organizer, Lucky Hollander. The project, nationally coordinated by the Institute for Peace and Justice in St. Louis, is designed to provide funds for the construction of playgrounds in war-torn Nicaragua. For more information write: Playgrounds, not Battlegrounds, c/o Institute for Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell, Suite 400, St. Louis, MO 63108.

**Media&Values** is a quarterly magazine being develped as a common forum among all denominations for the discussion and analysis of trends and issues in media and new communications technology. The General Conference is among the 13 supporting denominations and organizations. *Media&Values* is financed by subscriptions, grants and tax-deductible donations. The subscription price is $12 (U.S.), $14 (Canadian). Order from *Media&Values*, 1962 S. Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

# Reforestation desperately needed in West Africa

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—*"The rich forests and farmlands will be totally destroyed in the same way that a fatal sickness destroys a man. There will be so few trees left that even a child will be able to count them" (Isaiah 10:18-19).*

As I traveled through regions of sub-Saharan Africa recently, I became aware that the above tragic prophecy is still being fulfilled. On our study trip to visit Mennonite Central Committee workers and projects in Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), Chad and Nigeria, widespread forest destruction and resulting desertification were readily apparent.

The number of people, goats, cattle and sheep has exceeded the biological carrying capacity of the environment in many areas and the destruction accelerates. Overgrazing, excessive fuel wood cutting and land clearing for increased food production are the reasons for the land destruction.

For many kilometers around each village or city, the trees and other vegetation of the native savanna have been destroyed. We saw women and children carrying fuel wood and vegetation long distances to their homes.

We also saw many hectares of forest land being cut down and burned over to make more land available for agriculture. We saw large herds of cattle and goats destroying the vegetation.

One can almost see the deserts forming. The tropical sun beats down on the denuded land. The relative humidity decreases. Less rainfall occurs and the water table falls. Wells must be dug deeper and deeper. The soil loses texture, and when a desert rain does occur, flash floods cause erosion of soil and resultant ugly gulleys.

Estimates of the annual rate at which the Saharan desert is moving southward in the Sahel vary from six kilometers (United Nations) to 10 kilometers (MCC workers).

*David LaRash, MCC forestation worker in Nigeria, and colleagues planting papaya trees early in 1984*

According to Eric Eckholm in his book *Down to Earth*, more than 1 billion people live in areas where the collection of wood already outpaces new growth. Lester Brown of the Worldwatch Institute says that each year land in forest shrinks by an area the size of Indiana.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of reforestation for human survival, particularly in the African Sahel. If forestation is not a vital part of other development activities, I see little hope for averting the impending disaster of increasing starvation in West Africa.

MCC is aware of this need. David LaRash, MCC forester in Nigeria, is excited about the use of what he calls the "miracle tree" for reforestation in Africa. Also called Leucaena or ipil-ipil, the "miracle tree" is a fast-growing legume that adds nitrogen to the soil and can reach a height of 60 feet in six years.

LaRash grows these trees at the Faith and Farm Tree nursery. He distributes them through a network of extension agents. Several branch nurseries are being developed to multiply his distribution efforts.

John Morse, MCC West Africa environmental/food concerns worker in language study in Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), is enthusiastic about working at more MCC involvement in reforestation in the Sahel, when he gets on the job later this year. Other workers in West Africa agree with LaRash and Morse that reforestation is a critical priority in West Africa and should be expanded. *Art Meyer*


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For further information, please contact:
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(204) 338-1237.



## Administrator wanted

The board of directors of **Herbert Nursing Home Inc.**, owned and operated by the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan, are seeking an administrator for this 54-bed, level 111 facility. Duties to commence tentatively **Dec. 1**.

Applicant must be mature Christian whose faith would be in harmony with those of the owning body.

Experience in long-term care would be an asset, preferably with some training in the field. The applicant should have an understanding of accounting principles, the budgetary process and computer technology. Ability to communicate in both English and German is desirable. Starting salary is negotiable.

Deadline for applications is **Oct. 15**. Direct inquiries to (306) 784-2661. Applications with full resume should be submitted to:
Albert Jahnke, chairman
Herbert Nursing Home
Box 520
Herbert, SK S0H 2A0.

**Bethlehem Mennonite Church,** Bloomfield, Mont., will celebrate its 75th anniversary July 12-14, 1985. All former and current members and friends are invited to attend. For further information contact Dennis Webber, Route 1, Box 35, Bloomfield, MT 59315.

**"Jesus Interprets His Own Cross:** A Middle Eastern Cultural Approach" is the topic for the 1984 J. J. Thiessen lectures at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Oct. 23-24. Kenneth Bailey, professor of New Testament at the Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon, will be the guest lecturer. His knowledge of Middle Eastern culture has enabled Bailey to create a new methodology for New Testament studies that centers upon the cultural setting of a text. He is the author of *Poet and Peasant: A Literary Cultural Approach to Parables in Luke.* The lectures are open to the public.

**"Peace Church Evangelism"** will be the theme of the annual Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Peace Section Assembly, to be held Nov. 2-3 at Berne, Ind. The assembly is open to the public. Spirituality and children's peace education, as well as evangelism, will be major topics. The keynote speaker on evangelism and peacemaking will be Art McPhee of Needham, Mass. Gloria Miller of Hartford, S.D., will speak on parenting for peace and justice. Marcus Smucker, who teaches at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., will speak on the spirit of the peacemaker. To register, write to Lynn Liechty, First Mennonite Church, Berne, IN 46711.

# calendar

Oct. 26-28—"Dialogue on Faith," Camp Wonderland, Camp Lake, Wis.

Nov. 2-3—MCC U.S. Peace Section Assembly, First Church, Berne, Ind.

**Canada**

Oct. 23-24—J. J. Thiessen Lectures, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg

**Western**

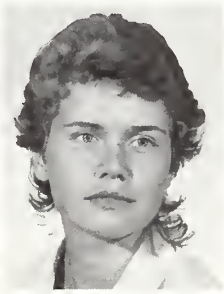
Oct. 19-21—Western District Conference, McPherson, Kan.

# workers

*David and Jan Preheim Bartel*, Eighth Street Church, Goshen, Ind., are beginning three-year assignments with Mennonite Central Committee in Kawimbe, Zambia. He will be working in rural community development and she will be working with women's groups. She holds a bachelor's degree in English and he in biology, both from Goshen College. His parents are Marvin and Delores Bartel of Goshen, and her parents are Vern and Marion Preheim of Newton, Kan.

*Lowell and Jeanette Miller Ewert*, Community Church, Fresno, Calif., have been assigned by MCC to Sidon, Lebanon, to work in social services administration with refugees. Lowell holds a bachelor's degree in social science from Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kan., and a law degree from Washburn University School of Law in Topeka, Kan. Jeannette received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Goshen (Ind.) College. His parents are David M. and Minnie Ewert of Mountain Lake, Minn. Her parents are John W. and Louise F. Miller of Kitchener, Ont.

*Friesen*



*Heppner*

*C. Peters*

*D. Peters*

*Suderman*

*Wiebe*

*Hilda Friesen*, Sommerfelder Gemeinde Church, MacGregor, Man., has been appointed by the Commission on Overseas Mission for a two-year overseas mission volunteer position in Mexico. Hilda will be serving in general nursing and public health at the maternity clinic operated by COM in Huevo Namiquipa, beginning Nov. 1. She is a graduate of the Grace General Hospital School of Nursing, Winnipeg.

*Judy Gingerich*, Harlan Mennonite Fellowship, Brookside, Ky., will work as an elementary school teacher in a three-year MCC assignment in Tanta, Egypt. She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Goshen (Ind.) College. Her parents are Vernon and Dorothy Gingerich of Hubbard, Ore.

*Sandra Heppner*, Bergthaler Church, Altona, Man., is beginning a one-year MCC assignment in St. Elizabeth, Jamaica. She will be working as a teacher assistant at Maranatha School for the Deaf. Her parents are Henry and Tina Heppner of Altona.

*Lee Kirk*, North Kildonan United Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, has been assigned under MCC's SALT (Serve and Learn Together) International program to Pato Bronco, Brazil. He will be working on maintenance and with the children at a day-care center. His mother is Elvera Kirk of Winnipeg.

*Allen Linscheid*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., has been appointed as the developmental disabilities coordinator for West Coast MCC. He began this half-time position Aug. 27.

*Cathy Peters*, Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, is beginning a one-year assignment in Calcutta, India, under MCC's SALT International program. She graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg. Her parents are Peter H. and Margaret Peters.

*David Peters*, Portage Church, Portage la Prairie, Man., has begun an assignment in Colony Menno, Paraguay, under MCC's SALT International program. He will be working with Colony Menno's Indian resettlement program

**The Children of War Tour,** sponsored by the Religious Task Force of the Mobilization for Survival and planned for Nov. 12-13, will bring together 33 young people (ages 12-17) from war zones around the world for a nationwide tour of public schools, religious and community centers. Participants will come from Northern Ireland, the Middle East, South Africa, Central America, Southeast Asia, the Marshall Islands, East and West Germany, and the Soviet Union, to be joined by a dozen U.S. kids from the children's peace network and minority communities. For more information contact Judith Thompson at (212) 858-6882.

**The Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt,** the largest Christian church in Moslem Egypt with about 6 million members, has begun a program to establish health clinics in rural communities. Rural areas suffer from inadequate medical personnel since doctors only go there reluctantly or not at all, but these areas have the greatest medical needs. Literacy programs have also been established. Mennonite Central Committee supports these projects through encouragement and financial contributions toward equipment, basic furnishings and drugs.

**Hispanic Mennonite pastors** are requesting training in the use of radio and television to share the gospel in their communities, according to Ken Weaver, director of Media Ministries for Mennonite Board of Missions. The Hispanic Mennonite Council and MBM are supporting Elias Acosta this summer as a facilitator and trainer for Hispanic pastors and lay leaders.

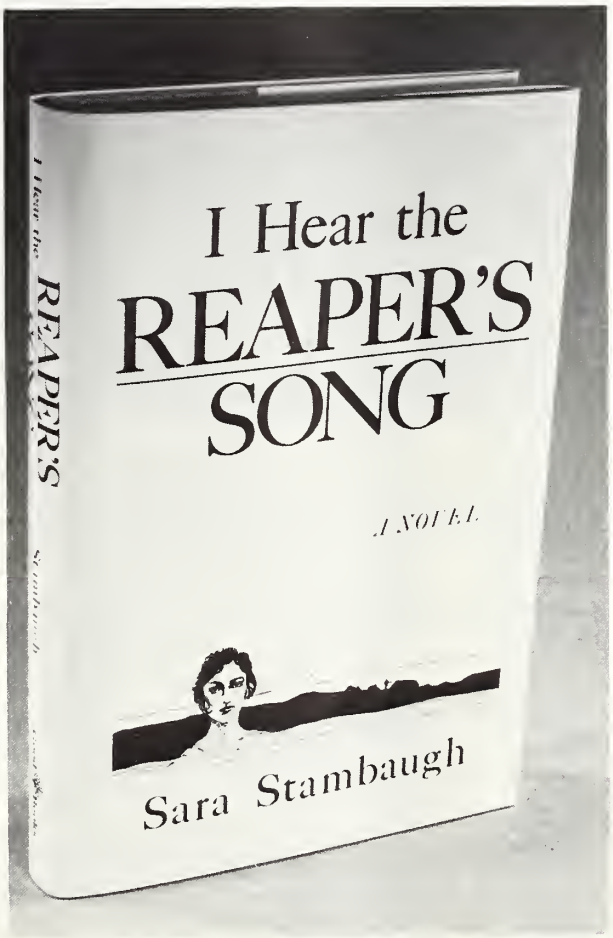
## RECORD

for one year. His parents are Jake and Frieda Peters.

*L. Julie Suderman*, Bergthaler Church, Winkler, Man., is beginning a one-year assignment in Mtshabezi, Zimbabwe, under MCC's SALT International program. She will be working as a secretary. Her parents are Abe and Tina Suderman of Winkler.

*Lorna Unger*, First Church, Winnipeg, has taken the position of secretary and writer for MCC Canada Information Services. She is replacing *Martha Janzen*, who has been assigned by MCC as secretary at the Kathmandu, Nepal, office of the United Mission to Nepal.

*Brian Wiebe*, Nordheim Church, Winnipegosis, Man., will be doing agricultural extension work and research in Rasau Jaya, Indonesia, under MCC for three years. He graduated from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg with a bachelor's degree in soil science. His parents are Jake and Nettie Wiebe.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# The church of the rich

"Jesus did not carry money or own any. He had no silver or gold, no cash income, no property, no stocks or bonds, no savings account, no hedge against inflation, no tax havens. He had nowhere to lay his head. . . . He founded the original church of the poor. . . ."

But today, says David Barrett in an article entitled "The Church of the Rich" in the July *New Internationalist*, "he has 1.5 billion followers who receive annual incomes totaling $6 trillion and who own two-thirds of the world's resources. On this basis, global Christianity has become overwhelmingly the Church of the Rich."

Barrett, editor of the acclaimed World Christian Encyclopedia, states that the worldwide average yearly income is around $2,400 per year. "But because Christians are concentrated in the Western world, their average yearly income is far higher at $4,500. Thus, though Christians number only 32 percent of the world's population, they receive 62 percent of the world's entire income. Non-Christians (who are concentrated in developing countries) average only $1,350. Since lifestyle depends on income, Christians across the world live on average at a level over three times higher than non-Christians."

But, Barrett points out, not all Christians belong to the Church of the Rich. Whereas 52 percent live in affluence and 35 percent are comparatively well off, 13 percent—almost 200 million Christians—"live in absolute poverty." Some 109 million Christians live in the world's 26 poorest countries. Half of the poorest Christians live in Latin America, a third live in Africa and the rest live in South and Southeast Asia.

"While it is surely outrageous that 750 million affluent Christians can continue to allow 195 million brethren in Christ to exist in abject poverty," Barrett says, it is surprising to note that these poor Christians have "church income totaling well over $300 million a year." The problem, however, is that the 195 million poor Christians live in close proximity to some 20 million relatively affluent Christians. These include church leaders, "few of whom are poor and a number of whom have become very rich since taking office."

"Regrettably," Barrett adds, "these 20 million show less concern for the poor than many of their co-religionists in the Western world."

*Thirteen percent—almost 200 million Christians—"live in absolute poverty."*

But, Barrett notes, "the Church of the Poor is poor only in material goods. They are far from being spiritual paupers. Spiritually, it is the Church of the Rich." He notes that some of the richest and most dynamic forms of Christianity today, and the most rapid church growth, "are to be found in areas of material poverty and destitution." He goes on to say that "this Church of the Poor is the only part of global Christianity whose lifestyle is similar to Jesus.' "

In theory, Barrett continues, the Church of the Rich should be giving to the poor in the church and to non-Christians. Many church confessions assert that Christians should tithe 10 percent of their income. If the Church of the Rich did this, Barrett indicates, $647 billion a year would be given away. In practice, however, "they give a third of this—something like $181 billion, if we include every kind of Christian. If we restrict the definition to affiliated church members, the annual donations total $160 billion." Forty-nine percent of this comes from North America, 34 percent from Europe, 2 percent from Africa and 1 percent from Asia.

"These huge sums become more intelligible when reduced to what the average individual contributes," Barrett writes. On the world level the average church member gives $76 a year ($1.46 a week). Individual giving is highest in North America, where members give $212 a year. It is lowest in Asia, the home of the poorest Christians, where members give $4.70 a year.

If church members with the largest incomes—those in Europe and North America—took tithing seriously and voluntarily took a 10 percent cut in income and gave it away, he states, they could produce a 93 percent increase in income for the 1.4 billion people in Southeast Asia, an 82 percent increase in Latin America or a 158 percent increase for every person in Africa. "To a large extent," Barrett concludes, "the global sharing by Christians of money, wealth, property and goods could solve most of the problems of famine, poverty, disease, unemployment, dangerous water supply and so on."

"Because this is so," he adds, "there is a sense in which Christians are to blame for the persistence of the present state of affairs."

Barrett concludes his article with a story. Several centuries ago a Roman pope who was a patron of the arts surveyed the vast artistic riches he had amassed and said, "No longer can the church of Jesus Christ say, 'Silver and gold have I none.' " "True, sire," a subordinate replied. "But then neither can she say, 'Rise up and walk.' " Material wealth, Barrett states, "has always carried the risk of spiritual bankruptcy. Today's Church of the Rich has vast resources capable of reaching the entire world for Christ. But unless these resources are immediately deployed to that end, this Church will ultimately prove to have had minimal spiritual impact upon the world." *MCC Canada News Service*

# mission: city

**Gateway to South America.**

What country is the "Gateway to South America?" What city in that country is one of the fastest growing cities in the world with over 6 million people?

The answers are Colombia and Bogota, home of the Iglesia Evangelica Menonita Colombiana.

Missionaries from the Commission on Overseas Mission participate with Colombian leaders in Bogota in three churches with varied ministries, leadership training classes, bookstores, an audiovisuals center, a home for the aged and relief and development projects.

In Bogota, these projects are expressions of the faith and work of committed Christians. You, too, can participate.

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## Comments on three articles

The July 17 issue had several interesting articles. Hubert Brown's blunt statements on Mennonites and racism, while not true of all Mennonite individuals, are probably true in a general way of many Mennonites outside of urban areas. His article stated his negative criticism of Mennonites but didn't say much about his positive vision of what Mennonites should be. His article in the current issue of *Festival Quarterly* gives a clearer idea of his hopes for a multicultural church. The word multicultural is much less familiar to U.S. Mennonites than to Canadians. How do Canadian Mennonites feel about their government's official "multiculturalism" policy? Will Canadian Mennonites end up leading the way in the multicultural Mennonite church of the future?

The article "The Computer Goes to Church" was also good. I appreciated the statement "If you can use a typewriter, you can use a computer." This statement is true, but on the other hand it seems vaguely threatening to my occupation as a computer programmer. The article didn't address some questions that need to be considered as computers come into use in churches. Privacy of information (especially financial information and counseling notes) needs to be carefully guarded. Then there is the perennial question of whether it is right to spend money on X (in this case, on a computer) when there are great needs all over the world. This last has been discussed so often for so long that I doubt there is a definitive answer.

Calvin Redekop's article was thought provoking, as usual. My question is, Why draw a line at the stock market? Our economic system is a continuous spectrum from local bank to stock market, from small business or farm to multinational corporation. It seems arbitrary to draw a line at some point and say that some economic structure is wrong as an economic structure. One can't isolate the stock market from the rest of the economy. If one condemns it, by implication one condemns the rest. It seems to me that one can say certain types of business, such as weapons manufacturing, are morally wrong and that other types, farming, for example, are morally right or at least neutral. But Redekop seems to be saying more than that. Does the fact that grain is traded on a commodities market (where people "gamble" even more than on the stock market) make farming wrong? It would make life a lot easier if we could see clear, obvious lines showing that a certain level of economic participation and lifestyle is right and others are wrong. Unfortunately, it seems to be more a matter of attitude. Of course, attitudes can be an easy excuse for self-indulgence. What kind of attitudes toward the economy should Christians have and what practical results will they have? The fundamental question is how to be "in" the economic world enough to make a living but at the same time not be "of" that world. *John D. Thiesen, 112 SE 8th, Newton, KS 67114*

July 31

## Responds to CMC sessions

I want to elaborate on some comments I made at the July 1984 Canadian Conference sessions in Three Hills, Alta.

1. *My response to Jim Wallis.* Wallis told us time and again that he came from an evangelical background with little or no social conscience. Perhaps that accounts for his current lifestyle. But to take and make the context of Jim Wallis' life the authority for a plan and program for the General Conference Mennonite Church would be totally wrong. At the conference I said, "Jim Wallis is scratching where we don't itch." I meant we are already too far down the road that he is urging. Our lack is not a social conscience but we are losing our evangelical conscience.

2. *Responses to my response.* These came in basically three categories. One totally disagreed with me and could be heard lauding Jim Wallis during the public responses allowed for in the sessions.

One slightly disagreed with me, and several shared this with me personally both before and after my public sharing. One person in particular struck a responsive chord when he admonished me gently that we must always be careful that we include the right evangelism. A question I wonder about is why we are not also cautioned to seek the right peace. It seems we are seeking any peace at any price—even a peace without the Prince of Peace.

The response of those who privately affirmed to me what they felt they could not say in public. Many said this would probably be the last conference they attended because of a perceived direction they see our conference taking. This would be the flipside of Nick Kassebaum's confident assertion in his morning sessions that "this stance attracts many."

I believe there is another side to the issue and that many are "voting with their feet"—leaving our churches, becoming inactive and attending postsecondary schools where they find a stance perceived to reflect our Anabaptist vision and heritage. To merely write these departures off as malcontents and church-hoppers will serve only to foster a mutual admiration society mindset. We are the losers for their departures.

3. *My response to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.* We have traveled much too far down an ill-advised road and there should be some redirection and reconstruction made. And it must begin in our schools. I believe we must pursue the development of evangelism departments in our Bible schools and colleges where the right evangelism is fostered and taught. If evangelism is a legitimate part of a peace lifestyle it must also be learned. *Kenneth Epp, Box 452, Herbert, SK S0H 2A0*

Aug. 7

## Computers in church

The computer articles (July 17 and 31 issues) remind me that the TV set has been called the monster in the living room. Will the computer become the monster in the church?

Computers are invading the privacy of people. I am told there is a company in one of the eastern states that specializes in de-computerizing businesses. This spring I stopped in at a Presbyterian church in central Missouri on a Saturday morning and the pastor was in a flurry. He told me he put his sermon in the computer and now it was stuck and he couldn't get it out. *Ward W. Shelly, 1110 Westminster Drive, Washington, IL 61571*

Aug. 8

## "New" Mennonite speaks

Thanks for the articles on "new" Mennonites (July 3 issue). My childhood and early adulthood were spent in a non-Mennonite milieu. Only in my late teens did I become aware of the existence of the Mennonite church, and in my 20s I joined one.

It did not take me long to see the cultural extensions that existed in the Mennonite churches I attended. I regularly read in the bulletin about borscht suppers, was told of fellowship evenings

consisting of "German circle games" and was asked to sing hymns in German.

I often notice "old" Mennonites showing surprise when interacting with members or attenders of Mennonite churches who do not have ethnically similar names, or that these people assume that all Ratzlaffs, Dycks and Wiebes are believers. Most "old" Mennonites I know seem to show more interest in those whose names are of ethnic Mennonite extraction.

These actions all say to a "new" Mennonite that those of a similar, familiar ethnic situation are worthy of more interest, more concern and fit in better.

Surnames, culinary traditions and cultural practices are trappings to which many "old" Mennonites adhere irrelevantly in spiritual settings. There is no biblical requisite for pluma moos, faspa or Low German. Although Floyd Bartel enjoys these things (personally, I enjoy lasagna and spring rolls), they can repel people from the Mennonite churches. These things, among other "Mennonite stigma," have caused me to seriously question my alignment with a church which seemingly cannot extricate itself from these spiritually irrelevant trappings. I am often reminded that there are many caring congregations of many denominations who would not ask me, as a new member, to be assimilated into their mold. Ultimately, it is the aura of concern, servitude and love projected by our congregation and modeled by our pastors, Elsie and Delmar Epp, that keeps me where I am.

I believe that cultural trappings exclude those who differ. I would encourage "old" Mennonites to continue to nurture their culture—outside of or within the church—while equally embracing the various cultures which undoubtedly exist in most, if not all, Mennonite congregations.

If the mandate of the Mennonite church is to preserve a set of secular traditions, then we have been successful. If our mandate is to add "living stones to our spiritual house," then it seems unproductive to place more value on culturally, ethnically similar stones. *Kit Johnston Loewen, 314 Niderost St., Saskatoon, SK S7J 0M1*

Aug. 13

## Copy of statement

In the July 31 issue I noted a reference, in the context of an article on a Believers' Church Conference (p. 375), to a "consensus statement in response to the Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry document." I would like to secure a copy of the statement. *John L. Carroll, Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851*

Aug. 13

*Editor's note: John, you can probably get it from Marlin Miller, president, Goshen Biblical Seminary, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.*

## Missions next door

Cleaning up some of the old papers, I came across the June 19 issue.

First of all I read the editorial "Missions Next Door" and couldn't help but sit down and write you that it is one of the best—if not the best—in my opinion that you have ever written. The truth of it becomes more and more evident, and one must believe that this is probably a sign of the end time. *C. B. Friesen, 415 East First St., Newton, KS 67114*

Aug. 13

## Computers not necessary

I was surprised and disappointed to read "We Have a Computer at Home" (July 31 issue). I look forward to *The Mennonite* for spiritual insight and information about others in the church. I certainly do not expect to see articles about a consumer product and what it means or will mean in people's lives. There was one short reference to stewardship, but that was quickly dropped to list the various household jobs the computer can do. Trivial tasks such as shopping lists, recipes and balancing the checkbook were listed. Surely Mennonites can manage these tasks and use the money for something which will be a better witness for Christ than having a computer in the home.

"And having food and raiment let us be content" (1 Timothy 6:8). Perhaps the article would have been better in a consumer magazine instead of a religious one. *Barbara A. Frank, 948 East Vine, Lima, OH 45804*

Aug. 13

## Mennonites and blacks

Hubert Brown's lead article, "Can I Be Black and Mennonite" (July 17 issue), is a great credit to *The Mennonite*. I have attended the Mountain View Mennonite Church in Upland, Calif., for several years. During this time blacks have attended church services from time to time. Characteristically they do not return after one or two visits, no matter how much they are welcomed. I believe this is because they don't like our quiet and non-emotional style of worship. By the same token, I have never felt at home in predominantly black churches. They were too loud and emotional for my tastes. The fact that Protestant Christianity covers a wide spectrum of cultural and ethnic groups is to me inherent in a free congregational church organization. That is not "Sunday apartheid." Blacks are always welcome in our church. But if they don't like our worship services, they are as free as I am to go to other churches.

Our "450-year-old social club" may be "irrelevant" (Brown's words), but it has been anything but irrelevant to millions of displaced and hungry people after both world wars, and wars and upheavals in several continents since then. I was resettled from China to California after World War II by Mennonite Central Committee.

I have had the privilege of several service trips as a physician to the Mennonite and Indian settlements in the Gran Chaco of Paraguay in the last few years and have seen what these people have done. After years of poverty and deprivation these Canadian and German settlers pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps and have converted the wastelands of the Paraguayan Chaco into productive farmland. I think that after the successive phases of victimization, segregation, integration and black power which Brown describes in his article, the time has come for American blacks to enter a new phase of self-reliance and initiative when they should pull themselves up by their bootstraps—following the many examples which Brown would learn about if he would study our 450-year Mennonite history. *G. Henry Schmitt, 1249 Quail Court, San Bernardino, CA 92404*

Aug. 14

## Questions Rutschman

Orville Rutschman's letter "Why Does God Charge Us?" (July 17 issue) raises several questions. What is the source of the "truth" that the Christian God is responsible for evil? And how does he expect to escape the wrath of God without "getting saved" in the light of Scripture such as John 3:17, Acts 4:12, Ephesians 2:5, 8 and many others? *Werner Zacharias, Fiske, SK S0L 1C0*

Aug. 15

# Called to jury duty

*Irene Ewert Wiebe*

"You are commanded to attend Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan at the Court House. . . ." On May 30 these words delivered by registered mail summoned Elsie Epp for jury duty on June 7.

What shall I do? thought Elsie, part of the pastoral team at Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon. She sought out church friends and others who might have knowledge of precedence on jury duty and Christian conscience. Epp had difficulty locating such people. Suddenly it took on prime importance: What do we believe and teach about jury duty?

Professors from the church schools gave their views. "Can We Serve on the Jury?" (*The Mennonite*, Oct. 11, 1983) and other newspaper clippings proved helpful. However, the pondering could not take too long, since in five days Epp had to return the form. Failure to comply could result in a fine up to $1,000.

Epp marked the square on the form requesting exemption on grounds of being a practicing member of a religion or religious order whose beliefs are incompatible with service as a juror. She included a letter stating her personal religious beliefs drawn from the Gospels, Romans and 1 Corinthians which state that we are not to judge others. Separation of church and state was also raised. Mennonite values of seeking justice for the underprivileged influenced her concern about the judicial system. "My first concern is over the fact that a juror can only determine guilt," stated Epp.

On receiving the form, Sheriff Stevens called Epp and informed her she would need an official statement supporting her position from a senior pastor or elder. This posed a problem since Elsie and her husband, Delmer, are co-pastors at Wildwood. Therefore she requested a letter from Larry Kehler, general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Kehler sent a statement supporting Epp's stand as in keeping with Mennonite teaching, but he also stated that not all Mennonites would necessarily take that position. Stevens said the letter did not give any weight to Epp's statement. He further advised that she would have to come to court and speak up before the judge.

In need of courage, Elsie drew from Luke 21:12-15: "But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves for I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict."

The Jury Act varies from province to province. Most have some provisions, related to religion, that permit exemption from jury duty. Grounds range from "ministers of the cult" to "clergy of any denomination" to "belonging to a religious order that makes service as a juror incompatible with the beliefs or practices of the religion." Mennonites in Manitoba have been exempted on this last clause.

Together with 49 other jurors, Epp appeared at the court where the final jury selection took place. While the accused and the jurors faced each other, the charges were read, and one by one the jurors' names were called. If not challenged, the juror was sworn in. Epp noted there was no opportunity given to affirm instead. She was one of the last to be called.

When her name was called, Elsie Epp said, "My personal and religious beliefs do not allow me to judge fellow people in the way that is required of a jury." After a brief silence the judge proceeded to give Epp a lecture, "If there were more people like you, this country would be in chaos. People like you don't deserve to have themselves and their families protected by the law." He also said she was putting her personal beliefs ahead of her duty as a citizen. After consultation with the defense lawyers, the judge pointed out that he could demand her to defend her position, but finally he excused her. Still, as Epp prepared to leave he stopped her once more, "Mrs. Epp, I want to emphasize that you are not to get the impression that it is easy to get out of jury duty."

Epp says that after leaving the courthouse, "I felt like everyone was staring at me because I'm this awful person."

In reflection Elsie says, "I'm profoundly impressed with the strength that is available to us through the prayer support of others." She also recognizes that others who have served on juries have felt it to be a meaningful opportunity to witness and, "I would not judge those who take a different stand."

Looking to the future, she said, "My hope is that Mennonite churches will do some study on this so that we will have more resources when faced with the question."

*Irene Ewert Wiebe, 813 Ave. U. North, Saskatoon, SK S7L 3C8, is a free-lance writer who prepared this story exclusively for* The Mennonite *upon our request.*

## Jury acts

The Jury Act in Canada is a provincial responsibility. Therefore it varies from province to province and in the territories. Here is information Irene was able to gather.

*Northwest Territories:* simply states that clergy of any denomination may be exempt.

*British Columbia:* grants exemption to those who belong to a religion or religious order that makes service as a juror incompatible with the beliefs or practices of the religion or order.

*Alberta:* exempts people whose conscience or religious vows preclude them from serving on a jury.

*Saskatchewan:* relief from jury service may be granted to one who is a practicing member of a religion or religious order whose beliefs are incompatible with service as a juror.

*Manitoba:* grounds for exemption are belonging to a religion or religious order that makes service as a juror incompatible with the beliefs or practices of the religion or order.

*Ontario:* excuses people on grounds that service as a juror is incompatible with the beliefs or practices of a religion or religious order to which they belong.

*Quebec:* ministers of a cult may be exempted.

*New Brunswick:* ineligibility includes: (a) ordained ministers, priests or clergy of any faith or worship licensed to perform marriages in the province, (b) people who are members of a religious order vowed to live only in a convent, monastery or other like religious community.

*Nova Scotia:* exemption may be granted to clergy and ministers of the gospel.

# Easter in Chengdu

*Winifred Beechy*

The China scene has made many changes since our first visit in 1980. One contrast is in the situation of the Protestant Church where we worshiped with Chinese Christians in the city of Chengdu, capital of Sichuan Province.

Our first attendance at the church was in the fall of 1980, only six months after the building had been returned to the Christians following the Cultural Revolution—the 10-year period in which all churches were closed and their buildings assigned to various "practical" uses such as warehouses, factories, offices or schools.

At that time the congregation was meeting in two small rooms of the large residence housing the church office, while in the same compound the church building was undergoing repairs and redecoration. In these two rooms were gathered the faithful few who had cautiously ventured back to public worship. The few rattan chairs and backless benches accommodated a dedicated congregation of about 70, including those seated on chairs set up outside the open windows and doors.

This small flock was led by seven elderly pastors, remnants of the seven varieties of Protestants who had once worshiped in seven different meetinghouses. In the 1950s, after the close of the missionary era, they had given up denominational designations and were all known as Protestants. Since no young pastors had been trained during the "10 lost years," the few remaining older pastors were called upon to lead the growing church as it resumed normal religious activities.

Growth was evident week by week. As soon as the church building was ready for occupancy in December, its pews, ample for more than 120 worshipers, were filled and overflowing.

On Easter Sunday 1984 we arrived at the church a little before 10 o'clock to find it already filled and the courtyard being prepared with folding chairs. The old church had been redesigned and enlarged, the attractive new addition itself more than double the original seating capacity. Each Sunday the 400 places are filled with Chinese people from across the sprawling city and even some country folks from its outskirts.

The buildings within the compound have been refurbished, the courtyard paved, and flowering shrubs or potted plants make it a pleasant retreat.

*Winifred Beechy converses with a teacher at the Sichuan Teachers College in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China.*

We had been here a number of times prior to Easter, so the new look of the church no longer surprised us—not even the modern light and airy building hunched up close to the church building. Intended to house the headquarters of the Protestant Church in Sichuan Province, it is near completion. The upstairs meeting room will be used by the local congregation for a Bible study class, conducted each Sunday before the morning service.

The usual greeters at the gate were flanked by two women handing out small white flowers and pins for fastening them to the lapel. Another gave us a small pink slip with a lily-of-the-valley design and some Chinese characters which were a mystery to those of us illiterate in Chinese. We later learned they were given to members inviting them to pick up their red-colored Easter eggs after the service.

We received joyful greetings and the sanctuary was also specially prepared for the gala event. The altar table was a mass of greenery with white flowers.

A tape recorder was fixed to the pulpit and the young man with his bag of photographic equipment was ready for action. (In a few weeks the pictures would be on display in the courtyard and copies of the tape available to interested members.)

As the choir made its entry in gleaming white robes with red trim, our Western ears were momentarily startled to hear the strains of "Adeste Fideles." But why not? Surely, it is as appropriate to call the faithful to celebrate the resurrection as the birth of the Messiah. One of the most faithful, Pastor Li, conducted the worship service. Call to worship: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" by the choir and congregation. Scripture reading and prayer by Pastor Li. "Low in the Grave He Lay" by the choir. Sermon by a visiting pastor and teacher in the newly opened Bible school. Some more verses of "Low in the Grave He Lay" with congregation joining in. Remarks by Pastor Li, followed by the Doxology sung by choir and congregation. Closing prayer by the pastor.

There was more on this special day. A baptismal service for 11 new members. The choir made its triumphant recessional: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today. Alleluia!"

Threading our way through the visiting clusters of people in the courtyard we learned that 750 people had participated in this solemn but happy service.

The Christian community in China radiates a spirit of optimism and confidence—confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit and confidence in themselves. They are proceeding with high expectations for the future, laying plans for an expanding and revitalized body of believers in China. It was good for us to be there.

*Winifred Beechy and her husband, Atlee, Goshen College, Goshen, IN 46526, spent four months in China in 1980 with the first of Goshen College Study-Service Trimester students. They have recently completed an additional four months in China, where they were serving under the auspices of the China Educational Exchange.*

## Embracing shalom

**Until Justice and Peace Embrace** *by Nicholas Wolterstorff (Eerdmans, 1983, 197 pages)*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, assistant editor*

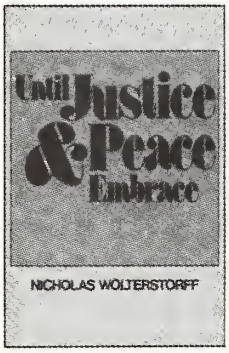
Can or should Christians work to change the world? If so, how? Nicholas Wolterstorff, a philosophy professor at Calvin College, boldly calls for and sets forth what he calls "world-formative Christianity." In answering how, he suggests that Christians must understand the world they wish to change and be guided by the biblical vision of shalom. But he emphasizes the former question in regard to the injustices of our world: "Our contemporary academics have not been lax in producing suggestions for how things might be handled differently. Over and over the crucial issue proves rather to be this: we are not as a whole persuaded that they *should* be handled differently" (p. 142).

*Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (the title is taken from Psalm 85, not 95, as the epigraph mistakenly reads) is based on the Kuyper Lectures for 1981 at the Free University of Amsterdam. It is addressed to scholars, which makes some of the reading heavy going. But he keeps relating the issues he tackles to everyday life, and the middle chapters are especially readable. But don't be put off. The book is worth working through. An acquaintance with Calvinism will help, and some Mennonites may be turned off by the favorable references to early Calvinists who had Anabaptists killed.

Wolterstorff outlines the modern world system in which a core controls the periphery. This economic oppression must be recognized and then changed. The problem, he says, is one of policy, not lack of resources or motivation, and it calls for a change in thinking. He juxtaposes this situation with the biblical picture of shalom, which he says must be our guiding principle. "Shalom is both God's cause in the world and our human calling. . . . An implication of this is that our work will always have the two dimensions of a struggle for justice and the pursuit of increased mastery of the world so as to enrich human life" (p. 72).

This tension between the world system and shalom forms the background of Wolterstorff's analysis of several world problems—mass poverty, nationalism, urban ugliness—and liturgy. In each of these areas he has insightful and important observations, but I was especially moved (inspired) by his call for building the "city of delight" and for balancing worship and proclamation in our liturgy.

In discussing the city, Wolterstorff distinguishes between aesthetics (with which his earlier book, *Art in Action*, deals more fully) and works of art. The shape of our environment affects us, he



says, and "the link between shalom and the aesthetic of the city has to occur in the phenomenon of delight—specifically, delight in sensory experience" (p. 130). By and large the church has ignored this aspect of shalom, creating and helping perpetuate drab structures and use of space. In a poignant comment that certainly applies to the Mennonite church, he adds, "It is impossible to speak on these matters without taking account of the intense pain that the artist has been given to suffer by several of the traditions of Christianity" (p. 130).

The book ends with a call for scholars to be praxis-oriented and self-critical. How, when we tend to shape our beliefs so that they justify how we live? "By listening to the cries of the oppressed and deprived we are enabled genuinely to hear the word of the prophets—and of him who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but took the form of a servant, walking the path of humble obedience to the point even of accepting execution as a despised criminal: the Prince of Shalom" (p. 176).

This book is powerful stuff.


### Job opening

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## Poems of biblical women

**Eve and After: Old Testament Women in Portrait** *by Thomas John Carlisle (Eerdmans, 1984, 139 pages)*

*Reviewed by Anna Juhnke, 104 W. 26th, North Newton, KS 67117*

Thomas Carlisle, a Presbyterian pastor, honors the women of the Old Testament in over 100 lively, thought-provoking poems. Although varied in style and often humorous, they consistently evoke admiration or sympathy for these unknown people of the Bible. The daughters of Zelophehad argue with Moses for the right to inherit their father's property. Orphah explains her decision to leave Naomi, whom she loves, rather than "live resentment and remorse/ far from my friends and my accustomed place."

The poetry itself is fresh and not difficult to read. However, many of the poems require a reading of the Bible reference before their full meaning emerges. The book, therefore, can be used as a guide to new discoveries in the Bible—for example, the heroic midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, "foremothers of the exodus," whose defiance of the Pharaoh permitted the Hebrew boy babies to live. But it also expands our imagination beyond the Bible. We see Pharaoh's daughter wondering whatever became of her adopted son, Moses. And, in a pair of insightful poems, we hear the love of both harlots whose contested baby was about to be split in two by Solomon.

Many of the poems carry a modern message. "Lot's Wife Looked Back" has the language of nuclear destruction. "The Valor of Vashti" shows the Persian court in terror of women's liberation. There are also personal meditations, as in the poems on Elisha and the Widow of Zaraphath: "God/ help us to be/ helped by the helpless,/ . . . whose 'nothing'/ multiplies/ and succors/ our starved souls/ and sets us back/ upon our forward journey."

Despite its paper cover, this is a good book for the church library. It is a delight for casual reading. And its study guide at the end has easy helps for Bible study and discussion.

# MEDITATION

## Time to read the Bible

Our church urged members to read the Bible through during the next year. My immediate response was, "I don't have the time."

When my husband suggested each member of our family make this a personal goal, I gave my answer. Then, noting his disappointment and the quizzical looks from our children, I hastened to justify myself. "There are too many chapters to read each day, and I can't spend my entire day reading."

That's when the Lord chided me. "Chris," he seemed to say, "what do you mean you haven't enough time for my Word? You're an avid reader." I winced at this. There are few things I'd rather do than read.

I read while cooking dinner, I read while sitting under the hairdryer. I've been known to prop open a book so I could read while ironing or washing dishes. I read while others watch television. And I've no time for Bible reading? It was a phony excuse and I knew it.

I wasn't convinced I could stick to the program, but I decided to try. Not only did I read the Bible through that year, I enjoyed doing it. I read it through a second year and a third. It became an integral part of my life.

Recently I devised a plan for supplemental Bible readings throughout the day. And still I thirst for more. God is working in my life in ways I'd never dreamed of.

That time loss I'd planned to experience simply hasn't happened. To my surprise, I pack more activity into my days than ever before and still go to bed at night with a song in my heart.

It seems unbelievable. And I wonder, Do you suppose it has anything to do with Matthew 6:33?

*Chris Ahlemann*

## Wrinkles are a roadmap

I used to fret
as I saw my youth vanishing
with each new line
etched indelibly
on my face.

Now I view wrinkles
as identity markers
of an ever-growing
maturity.

I want each line
to represent
another difficulty successfully
passed through.

And when my face
looks like a roadmap,
I want to be eagerly,
enthusiastically waiting
to hear those coveted words:

"Well done, my good and faithful servant."

*Naomi Mumbauer Strunk*

# CONTENTS

How can we grow spiritually as individual Christians, as congregations, as conferences/denominations?

Some say it can only happen if we let a few strong leaders guide us. Others think it must happen by speaking truth at all levels and then depend on the Holy Spirit.

The Bible shows us that even in the early church there were many growth problems. Some people were not properly served; other people took too much for granted.

This issue is dedicated to remind us of those who feel inadequately served. It also reminds us how learning happens. And we pray it will encourage spiritual growth within the whole General Conference.


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# editorial

## Some of this, some of that

**Personnel.** I hope many of you read our "contents" section carefully. If you do, you must have noticed recent changes.

Larry Cornies moved from one office at Newton to another one. Instead of serving *The Mennonite*, he has become communications director for the conference. Much as I hesitated to see Larry go, I'm glad our staff is sought after by others.

Gordon Houser has moved from editorial assistant to assistant editor of *The Mennonite*. Gordon has served *TM* now for six years and it is a privilege to change staff from within the ranks. He deserves the chance to assume more initiative and responsibility. We covet the prayers of all readers for Gordon and myself as we edit your General Conference publication.

Sharon Sommer, formerly the secretary for *The Mennonite* and for the GC News Service, continues as *TM* secretary but now is also our editorial assistant. I'm delighted we were able to make staff changes from within. To me it says a lot about the quality of our team and the spirit of our teamwork.

Next summer I will have completed three terms—nine years—as editor of *TM*. In the next few months my appointment will be evaluated and reviewed. Is it time for a change? My desire is to serve wherever the Lord would have me. If it is time to move on, I'm ready to do that. I'm anxious to hear what you would say to me and to the General Board by whom I am appointed.

Editing this conference publication, 1,000 miles from the place where it is printed and from central offices, is not simple. It requires much trust among staff. One of my greatest joys has been to work now for over eight years without one major personal misunderstanding (to my awareness) between myself at Winnipeg and the other *TM* staff at Newton. There have been administrative and press problems we have had to work out, but our *TM* team has been a creative experience.

The greater challenge has been the circulation and content of *The Mennonite*. Our paid subscriptions have remained relatively unchanged these years. When we added readers, we also lost some. To me it remains a serious puzzle how any GC member would not want to receive its paper.

I have heard many reasons for not subscribing and for cancellations. Some don't want to know those things about their spiritual family which they don't like or can't understand. (I wonder how such people handle differences and problems in their own human families.) They want to see only those things printed that seem good to them. (Would we need a paper if all we want to do is repeat what we already like?)

In my understanding of the Bible it is clear that believers need to expect disagreements and challenges (see Acts 1-15). The Bible tells us the beautiful (John 1-3) and the ugly (Genesis 4; Luke 22-23). In God's Word there is no place for half-truths and hidden secrets that mar and break fellowship (Acts 5). The truth in Christ may hurt our feelings, our minds, our spirits and even our bodies. But ultimately it sets us free from the bondages of sin.

My agenda for *The Mennonite* is that in it we speak the truth in love about God, about Jesus, about the Holy Spirit, about the whole Bible, about believers, about Mennonites in all the stripes and flavors of our "rainbow" family. We speak in trust that when we learn unpleasant truths it will cause us first to pray and search out our weaknesses. When we risk to judge and criticize (and those are legitimate tasks for all of us), let us begin with our own confession of faith, our repentance for sin, and with Christlike compassion love those we can't understand or agree with.

We often play spiritual hide-and-seek. I refuse to play that game in *The Mennonite*.

**Projections.** In 1985 *The Mennonite* will be 100 years old. Our General Conference will celebrate its 125th anniversary.

*The Mennonite* will go from publishing 26 times per year to twice a month (24). And the subscription prices will go up.

But you will get more for more. We have been asked to put out two special issues (with extra pages and color) in 1985. Regular subscribers will get these free (more pages than before). One will be a centennial issue and one a 125th anniversary special.

The greatest single influence to increase or decrease circulation lies with GC pastors. Pastors, I urge you and challenge you to help build a GC spiritual family based on trust and truth in Christ. *The Mennonite* I edit will remain committed to our growing GC spiritual family. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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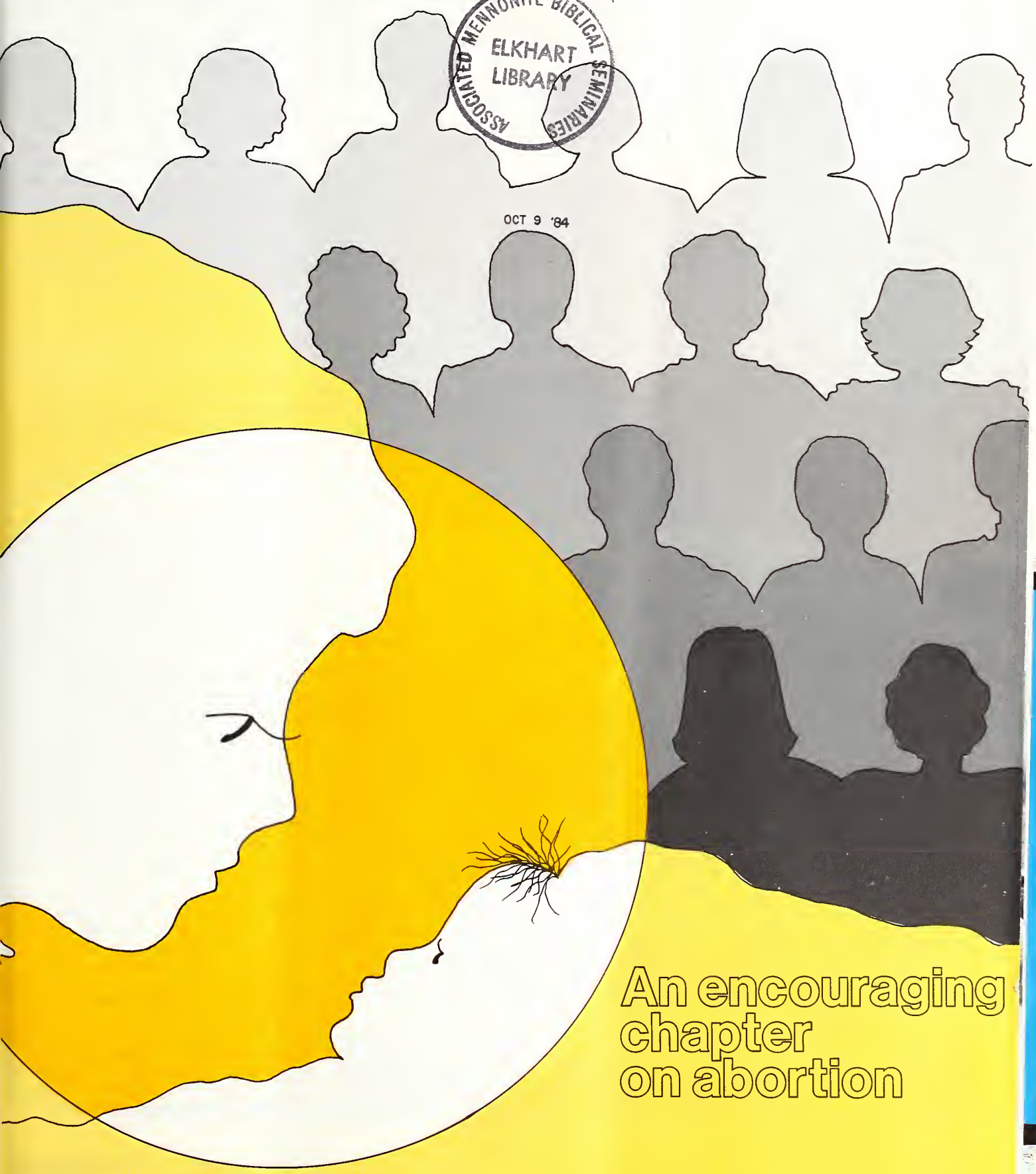

## An encouraging chapter on abortion

# An encouraging chapter on abortion

**Abortion: the issue.** The abortion story among us is far from over, and the dilemma worsens. My latest statistics show 1,553,900 legal abortions in the United States in 1980 (U.S. Bureau of Census, *Statistical Abstracts of the U.S.*, 1984, p. 71) and 66,319 legal abortions in Canada in 1982 (Statistics Canada, Basic Facts on Therapeutic Abortions, p. 14).

Examination of the last several years suggests a plateauing effect, and more women are delivering their babies. Yet the killing of fetuses rages as one of the most controversial issues in our time. People choose to be either pro-life, essentially against all abortions, or pro-choice, essentially endorsing any woman's right to decide if she will carry a pregnancy to term or abort within a reasonable time since conception (often this time is reneged on due to a variety of circumstances).

The controversy is as strong, if not stronger, in the churches than in society. Christians do not agree on what is life or when it begins and therefore also disagree on the meaning of abortion. Since religious statements usually generate lots of emotion, a topic like abortion creates instant, hot debate when raised among Christians. If one wants a good-seller today, write an article or book on abortion with a strong pro- or anti-position. (*Moody Monthly*'s biggest story in 1983 was a large anti-abortion spread.)

**Words come cheap.** I have been afraid to do much writing on this subject. Editorials in both *The Mennonite* and the *Mennonite Medical Messenger* have told my conviction that respect for human life includes the helpless unborn. A consistent non-resistance peace position includes a strong anti-abortion position. This is not to deny the real dilemmas doctors face daily in which they have to make life choices involving abortion. It says that Christians ought to freely talk about unwanted pregnancies and seek God's will here as on any other area of our lives, even though we have to risk making bad decisions.

We have published articles pertaining to experiences involving the question of abortion. A major reason I have not filled many pages with polemics either pro- or anti-abortion is that words come cheap. We can argue eloquently and verbosely on conference floors and in papers, but we also know about verbal inflation today.

In my heart and mind and soul I have often cringed at the verbal assaults coated in Bible verses and launched from both sides. At times God must weep at our eagerness to prove *we* are right and *they* are wrong. I have wondered if pro-choice people are ready to accept the consequences of their rhetoric. Is it acceptable to them (I'm on the other side) that abortion become a popular birth control mechanism? How do you deal with the continuing guilt feelings I have heard from several Christian women who have aborted for convenience sake? Can such an important question ever be an individual issue in the body of Christ?

My hesitations have been no less about being pro-life myself and about the whole movement. We say all fetuses have a right to dignity and birth. And we urge all women to carry pregnancies to term, regardless of age, handicaps, incest, adultery, rape or being single. It scares me to think of the emotional load we put on such women. It is especially easy for male preachers to say because we'll never be pregnant. But when the crunch comes in our churches, will we be there with our support? In the nitty-gritty, are we speaking nice words but expecting unfortunate women to fend for themselves? No woman can become pregnant by herself, and we have said almost nothing about the men involved.

I confess to doubts that even Mennonites have the courage to live out such convictions. Would I be willing to take care of or adopt a child whose mother for any of a million reasons could not or would not do so? I still wonder.

**A telephone call.** The afternoon of March 1 my telephone rang. Since I was on my way to Newton, Kan., for the Council of Commissions, the call was routed two offices down to Larry Kehler, general secretary of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Wayne Plenert, a lawyer who is moderator of the Mennonite Brethren congregation at Dawson Creek, B.C. (about 750 miles northeast of Vancouver, about 370 miles northwest of Edmonton),

called about a baby that was prematurely born on Feb. 22 to a single mother. Wayne is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College, a GC currently worshiping with an MB church. He said he recalled articles in *The Mennonite* about our support for adopting children where circumstances led mothers to give up their babies. It was part of our pro-life writing and he specifically mentioned a letter to the editor from an Ohio couple who were looking for a baby to adopt.

The young, unmarried woman had wanted to keep her baby. When I spoke with her via telephone on May 1 she told me she did not believe in abortion. And she would have kept the baby boy except for complications. Ten days prior to his premature birth, a scan showed up two handicaps. This did not make her love the baby less. She said that the few days she spent with her son in the hospital were some of the happiest days in her life. But she knew the baby needed more care than she could give and afford. So she had called Wayne Plenert about adoption. Her preference was a Mennonite home.

Wayne must have had some of my kind of fears. He told me he also contacted a private agency for help. It is significant that Plenert got involved at all, since lawyers cannot charge for adoption services.

**A test case?** When Larry Kehler got the call from Wayne Plenert requesting that a Mennonite home take in this child, Larry wrote several CMC pastors about the situation. When I got the message, I had a sleepless night. Finally here was a chance to act rather than talk. Would Mennonites pass the test? I contacted Ken and Phyllis Schmidt, 15468 County Road 18, Middlebury, IN 46540, who have started the Heart Cry ministry for such situations. In addition I wrote some of my social worker friends and some of the other Mennonite editors. Then I waited anxiously.

On March 23 I heard from Ken Schmidt that several families had contacted Wayne Plenert. On April 3 Larry Kehler got a call from a member of the Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary that Elizabeth Wiebe, single, 28 years of age, a graduate in early childhood education and a Foothills member, was applying to adopt the baby.

I spoke with Elizabeth on May 1. She said, "I felt it was something I could do." To her the young boy she went to meet on April 8 and brought home on April 13 was a child who needed someone. After praying for God's will, she said she felt if her application was accepted it would be God's sign that she was doing the right thing.

The baby has hydrocephalis (water that accumulates in the cranial cavity; it is drained from the brain with a shunt) and spina bifida, which may affect his mobility to some extent for the rest of his life. Elizabeth says these handicaps didn't matter to her.

When I spoke to Elizabeth, young Nolan had been with her just over two weeks. She said he seemed to win the hearts of the Foothills people who met them at church and he also won the hearts of her family and friends. When I asked about criticism, Elizabeth told me she had heard none to that date.

**Where does that put us?** Wayne Plenert told me via telephone, also on May 1, that contacts had come from several states and several provinces, and this was impressive. He did have mixed feelings because most of the people seemed to back off quickly when they heard of handicaps. They seemed to expect the worst. The baby's biological mother told me also that this had been the hardest part in the whole process. Many people would not even discuss the kind of handicap.

The biological mother told me she was grateful for the support of her church, her family and the father of the infant.

The adopting mother told me little Nolan had been a happy, smiling son since he came to Calgary. When I called her on May 1, I had to speak to her at Tabor, Alta., where she had gone to visit family and relatives to show off her son. Since Elizabeth just graduated, she was now making child-care arrangements for her son during working hours. She has a teaching job in Calgary and expects to support Nolan and herself.

A pregnant woman carried her child to delivery. At least one Mennonite woman backed up her belief in the sacredness of life by adopting this child. It is an encouraging chapter in a large story.

Does that solve the problem for you and me? Is it an accident that it took another single woman to live a belief held by many of us?

My questions still nag me some. I wonder whether we talk much more than we are willing to live?

**God smiled.** I do sleep more peacefully and I praise the Lord that the Mennonite network did not fail the baby and the mother in British Columbia. It is gratifying that there are those among us who not only oppose abortion but are ready to care for infants who are born and need parenting.

God smiled on the world when this boy was born. I believe he gave an extra smile upon the General Conference Mennonite Church when the baby was adopted by one of our members. At least for this incident we quit arguing and, instead, put our faith into action.

May we be found sensitive and open to God's Spirit on this large issue and deserve more smiles of this nature. •

*The Southern Baptist Church works with abandoned youngsters in Brazil. It is said that there are over 600,000 in Sao Paulo alone. Here are just two that were received into one of the Baptist group homes.*

*When you prepare to give or to invite for a banquet this Thanksgiving or Christmas, "invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed. . ." (Luke 14:12-14* NIV*).*

*Gary Hiller*

# The Thanksgiving feast

*"A little humanity . . . accomplished what no techniques could achieve within the cold sterile walls of isolation and social rejection."*

"Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous'" (Luke 14:12-14 *NIV*).

It was one of those things that you say and wish you hadn't. Two Sundays before Thanksgiving I blithely asked my Sunday school class, "Is everyone going to have a big meal with their family for Thanksgiving?" I intended to use this common experience as an illustration for the morning's lesson. That lesson may soon be forgotten, but not Virginia's tears as she replied, "I don't have a family for Thanksgiving."

My class that morning at Ephrata Mennonite Church was a special one composed of mentally retarded adults from our congregation and community. Two of the most faithful attenders were from a nearby group home. While visiting them during the week, I met a new resident who eagerly responded to my invitation to our class. Virginia was now with us.

Momentary embarrassment over my thoughtless inquiry quickly gave way to compassion for the frail, tearful woman before me.

"Maybe you can be with my family for Thanksgiving," I tentatively offered.

"Can I? Promise?" Intense, eager eyes looked up.

"Well," I hedged, "I better not promise. I should ask my wife first."

"Maybe she won't want me." More tears.

"Okay, Virginia, I promise that I will find a family for you for Thanksgiving."

A smile transformed her face and the class went on.

In the back of my mind I wondered what my wife would say. Over the years we had hosted several such people in our home and at our table. We even had a mentally handicapped foster child for a few months. But this was Thanksgiving, short notice, we were going to my parents' home and we hardly knew this woman.

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Yet, although Virginia and I had met only recently, her name was familiar. Four people from state institutions were to be admitted to Friendship Community 18 months earlier when the main group home near Landis Homes converted to an intermediate-care facility for the mentally retarded. The people were to be selected from lists submitted by each institution in the central region. Appropriately, Friendship Community gave preference to people whose families desired that they be in a Christian environment. Although Virginia did not have a family, she seemed to be able to fit into the program and was fifth on the list. She could come to Friendship Community if one of the other four did not wish to come. They all did.

Seeing her before me now, I felt keenly responsible to provide the Christian fellowship and spiritual input that could have been more easily attained as a Friendship Community resident. Surely the church could have outreach into this non-Christian home that went beyond Sunday morning.

I recalled a dinner invitation 11 years ago. As a student intern at the Harrisburg State Hospital, one of my assignments in the mental retardation annex was particularly difficult. Raymond had not spoken for 15 years and my task was to get him talking again.

Yes, Raymond had the ability to talk. He talked quite well when he was institutionalized 30 years before. But there was not much worth talking about in a state hospital back then and no one wanted to hear it anyway. So after 15 years he got wise and saved his breath.

All my techniques fell flat as I tried unsuccessfully to elicit a verbal response. After weeks of frustration, I took him home for dinner. As far as I knew, it was his only visit to a family's home in 30 years.

My mother greeted Raymond like he was a college friend of mine. "Raymond," she said, "Gary has told me so much about you." Mom was pretty good at having a conversation with little or no response at the other end, so "they" chatted until dinner was served. Soon he was around our table, passing the peas like everyone else.

As our time together came to a close, I was pleased with how things were going, but I almost fell out of my chair when Raymond said, "Thank you for the good meal." A little humanity had accomplished what no techniques could achieve within the sterile walls of isolation and social rejection.

I do not know what became of Raymond, but here was Virginia, out from the walls and accessible to the community and to the gospel, approaching the holiday season with a similar isolation and spiritual darkness.

Just a month before Virginia's tears, I had spoken to a large Mennonite congregation using Luke 14:12-14 as the key text. In it Jesus commands us to invite the poor and handicapped to our dinners and feasts. Lest they fail to carry out that command for lack of a handicapped person to invite, I told them that they could call me for some names. But it is convenient not to know of such people or see their tears. No one called.

I suppose there will be many among us offering pious prayers for the "less fortunate" amid the bounty of food and fellowship during this holiday season while people like Virginia look in from the cold upon our steaming tables and laughing faces. According to James, such prayers are like the hot air rising from the stuffed turkey. "Faith without works is dead."

There are people like Virginia all around us. Those with a heart filled with Jesus' love are aware of them. They cannot sit down to feast after feast without at least once feeling uncomfortable—not because a handicapped person is present but because of a conspicious absence at the table.

If you feel compassionately grateful today, I encourage you to express it by inviting at least one special person to your feast. •

*This person sits alone at a psychiatric center near Havana in Cuba. There are many such "alone" people right near your home. How about inviting at least one over to your home for a visit?*

# The anticipated celebration

*Vera Byer*

*(Poem written after a time of prayer for a couple whose child was stillborn)*

An acorn
Fell from the tree,
Landed with a plop onto the ground,
And settled there,
Prepared to grow.
A squirrel,
Storing food for winter,
Grabbing the acorn with his paws,
Hastily scampered away
To his nest—
A tree that almost was.

Snowflakes
Falling to the ground,
Gathering together upon the mountain;
A blanket of white,
Prepared for spring.
Parched earth,
Dry for lack of rain,
Awaits the rapidly melting snow
And drinks heartily,
Consuming all—
A stream that almost was.

A pencil,
Paper with lines,
With notes partially filling the page;
Words written down,
Prepared for singing.
A tune,
A psalm of praise
Floating inside an old saint's head;
Work calls to him,
And time flies—
A hymn that almost was.

New life
Growing within;
Heart, limbs and identity developing,
Legs and arms moving,
Prepared for living.
Happy parents
Anticipating the future,
Their hearts and home making ready,
And God calls home
The little soul—
A child who almost was.

Someday
In the realms of glory
I shall celebrate.
I shall sit under
The tree that almost was;
Beside
The stream that almost was;
Sing
The hymn that almost was;
And hold in my arms
The child who almost was.

# Citizens of God's country

*Amy Adelstein*

A pilgrim people
sanctifies the earth.

Every tree,
every brook
is a provision;

every thought,
every word
a gift
whose value
overwhelms you
at some point.

You assume nothing
and hope everything.

Like Jacob,
you travel light
and dream deep.

Like Joseph,
you wait,
and harvest visions,

Over and over
you rehearse
your redemption

through water
through blood
through the sojourner
among you.

# When rules don't seem to work

*Ted VanderEnde*

Proverbs, in Israel and in any culture, speak of the general rules for wise living. They give an overview of what can be expected, what is normal. But the proverbs and axioms we use in daily life do not always fit the circumstances. We all believe that a child trained in the way it's supposed to go will not depart from it. But there is the exception, the father and mother who deep down know they followed the rules and yet find their child wayward. Though it seems proper to teach your children that being right, true and good will be rewarded, the fact of the matter is that often it is not. One can go on reciting examples of personal experiences which prove that a proverb does not apply. Like the wonderful idea that wisdom brings a garland of recognition.

The truth of the matter, says the preacher in Ecclesiastes, is that "there was once a small city with only a few people living in it. And a powerful king came against it, surrounded it and built huge siegeworks against it. Now there lived in that city a man poor but wise, and he saved that city by his wisdom. But nobody remembered that poor man. . . . The poor man's wisdom is despised and his words are no longer heeded" (Ecclesiastes 9:14-16). In other words, what may be true most of the time in most circumstances is not always true for some circumstances.

In fact, Ecclesiastes claims, behind the wonderful order of creation and society there is that entity called "vanity of vanities." The rules learned in childhood and still true at times, do not really talk about the mysteries of life, the riddles of existence. Job thought that his life was predictable—a life of blessing—since he was a righteous man. And when that predictable life collapsed, his friends came running to tell him that the answer to his troubles was his sin. To this accusation Job reacted vehemently. To him life could not anymore be explained by platitudes, helpful as they may be. Life had become a riddle, an enigma. It no longer made sense.

Stage two of wisdom comes like a cold shower. Thinking you can lay hold of life by knowing and applying the tried rules, the sage now observes that life is more complex than knowing how to become happy and stay that way. For, wisdom also states, circumstances often lay hold on you. Calamity strikes, the unexpected happens. Job, the righteous, suffers. The hardworking family man has a son who wastes it all. The fool is on the throne and the wise is in prison. The poor person is trampled under foot even when she or he is wise. War comes when nobody wants it. In spite of all our wisdom, death comes to all. The wise and the fool both die, and who will remember the wise a few generations from now?

On and on both Job and Ecclesiastes question the routine and simplicity of following the established rules. If these rules really don't fit, why seek wisdom to begin with? When life is filled with enigmas that seemingly cannot be understood or solved, why try to change?

The wisdom of stage two argues that the believer follows wisdom in spite of the questions. After all has been heard and we have seen that the answers on the tough questions of life are hard to come by, the best way to cope is still to "fear God and keep his commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). To abandon wisdom has only one result: to become a fool. Therefore, in spite of our ignorance, it is true that "wisdom is better than folly, just as light is better than darkness" (Ecclesiastes 2:13). The answer is not to give up in times when death comes, when plants are uprooted, in times of killing and war, in times of weeping when there is lack of love, when mourning or when hate prevails (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). We cannot give up our daily work which gives satisfaction, or cease to love the spouse of our youth, or refuse to see the beauty of life. And, above all, we cannot cease to fear God, for without God there is but darkness and folly.

And it must be observed that it is often in times of mourning that we can learn more about life than we can in times of dancing. It causes us to reflect and to know that we never will know all.

In Psalm 73, a stage-two wisdom psalm, we read the personal testimony of a believer baffled by the success and prosperity of wicked people. They, he says, are not sick, don't worry about right or wrong, and their indifference toward God does them no harm. Why should I believe? What is the advantage of being sensitive to God and his will? The answer is discovered when he comes into the presence of God and perceives that life is more than our temporal existence here on earth.

There is a judgment to come, there is another world beyond this temporal world, and this makes all the difference. There is a God who sees the poor suffer in spite of the efforts of the godly, who sees the mother weep when the child is run over by a drunk. Wisdom urges us not to forsake a righteous God who seems withdrawn from this evil world. And this insight is what we need today as much as in the days of Israel's sages.

*Sixth in a series*

*Ted VanderEnde, 102 Madison, Pandora, OH 45877, is pastor of St. John Mennonite Church.*

# He loved to give

*Gladys Krehbiel* and *Ed R. Stucky*

"I consider Nelson Krehbiel one of the most community-minded and benevolent people I've ever worked with," says Ed R. Stucky of Moundridge, Kan. "He was an astute businessman and a born philanthropist."

In his earlier days Krehbiel was associated for over 30 years with the Moundridge Milling Company. During the Depression he walked the streets at night, pondering how he could keep the family business solvent.

Despite business difficulties, Krehbiel's benevolent spirit could not be suppressed. His friend and brother-in-law Willard Graber once asked him, "Would you like to have a million dollars?" Krehbiel said, "Not particularly, but I'd sure like to give away a million dollars."

After he had graduated from Oberlin (Ohio) College, Krehbiel had planned to attend the Harvard School of Business Administration. However, at the end of his senior year, flu together with double pneumonia nearly took his life and left him weak and physically debilitated.

When he came home, his parents decided he should not go anywhere until he regained his health. Shortly thereafter his uncle, who was associated with his father and brother in the mill, suddenly dropped dead on a street in Moundridge. Krehbiel agreed for the time being to take his place in the mill.

*Despite the crushing blows . . . Krehbiel continued to contribute to his family, friends, church and projects, chief among them Christian education. He also helped various congregations with financial campaigns to build new sanctuaries.*

On Sept. 6, 1922, Krehbiel married Gladys Irene Heaston of McPherson, Kan. The Krehbiels had one daughter, Anne.

In 1935 Krehbiel's brother Carl died suddenly from a heart attack, and Nelson was left caring for his aged and ailing father, serving as guardian for three little nieces and managing a complex and demanding business.

Many mills were having a difficult time making ends meet. Seven millers in the southwest committed suicide during this trying period. Krehbiel decided if one thing did not work, maybe another would.

To bolster the family business he bought a factory in McPherson which was making a whole wheat cereal called Brown Derby. He brought the machinery in that plant to Moundridge and installed it in the mill. This was during World War II, and the income from selling the whole wheat cereal to the armed forces overseas was a great boon to the Moundridge Milling Company. At one time the mill had over 100 employees and ranked third among companies selling cereals to the armed forces overseas.

Despite a demanding schedule, Krehbiel took out time for his music. He is remembered for having performed the Tchaikovsky Concerto with Wilhelmina Bixel, who played the score of the orchestra transposed for the organ. For years he conducted a Christmas cantata at the West Zion Church.

In 1948, at the age of 50, Krehbiel's health began to fail. He sold the mill and retired, but his agile mind could not accept inactivity and he soon joined Clayton Vogt in the lumber and construction business. Again tragedy struck when Vogt was killed in an airplane crash. Then his best friend, Willard Graber, was killed in an auton obile accident.

Despite the crushing blows, many rewarding years followed in which Krehbiel continued to contribute to his family, friends, church and projects, chief among them Christian education. He also helped various congregations with financial campaigns to build new sanctuaries.

His enthusiasm and imagination spread into the world of sports. In his youth he played baseball and basketball. He was an ardent golfer and a skilled tennis player. He organized the Moundridge Golf Club and designed two nine-hole courses. He founded the Central Kansas Collegiate Basketball Tournament.

Although he was bedridden for most of the last 10 years of his life he never complained, saying, "What good could that do?" He did much of his planning while bedridden at the Moundridge Memorial Home. He looked out the window of his room and saw the dust rising from the road that surrounded the home and decided to hardsurface it at his own expense. Not long before he died he had lightning rods installed on the buildings of the home and he bought a snowplow for the home.

*Nelson Krehbiel*

He had also given generously to Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He made the initial gift toward building the Krehbiel Auditorium there and established a fund for endowing a chair in forensics.

When he died in 1982, his wife received many letters of condolence. Among them were the following tributes: "He was an astute thinker with opinions of his own which he never forced on others." "He was sparing with criticism but lavish with praise." "He had that inimitable quality—a blend of gentle humor and high seriousness." "He was incapable of hurting another human being." "No one ever saw him lose his temper. I doubt if he had one." "He never asked someone to do something he would not and could not do."

Krehbiel's favorite saying was, "Hold on one minute longer forever."

*Gladys Krehbiel lives at the Moundridge Memorial Home, Box 29, Moundridge, KS 67107. Ed R. Stucky's address is Box 319, Moundridge, KS 67107.*

# Attitudes and nuclear war

In the September issue of *Psychology Today* (p. 70), Perrin French, a clinical assistant professor of psychiatry and the behavioral sciences at Stanford University, writes an article called "Preventive Medicine for Nuclear War."

French says that as of June, about 24,000 doctors and dentists have become members of Physicians for Social Responsibility. PSR is dedicated to educating the public about the medical consequences of nuclear war.

How effective are educational efforts in producing attitudinal changes about nuclear weapons?

To illustrate a response, French describes an experiment he and colleagues did between February 1981 and October 1982.

Using a two-part (before and after) survey, data were obtained from 1,355 people attending educational presentations given by a physician in the San Francisco area. The subjects were members of 57 separate audiences, which included activist meetings, service club luncheons, school assemblies, church forums and meetings of health professionals. Some were "captive," with the presentation coming in the course of a routine function, and others were self-selected, with the information presented at a preannounced anti-nuclear war forum.

Each person completed the Nuclear War Attitude Survey, a 19-item questionnaire developed to explore attitudes toward and knowledge about nuclear war. Ten opinion items, including the statement "There are causes worth fighting a nuclear war for," and nine "factual" questions were answered.

Of the 1,355 people who completed the survey, 140 circled "true" after the statement "There are causes worth fighting a nuclear war for." That is, prior to any educational presentation of the medical and physical consequences of nuclear war, approximately 10 percent of those questioned said they could countenance nuclear war.

*One of the U.S. Air Force's most famous planes, the B-29 "Enola Gay," is shown landing on Tinian, in the Marianna Islands, after dropping the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, on Aug. 6, 1945.*

*Can Christians ever again support such an event?*

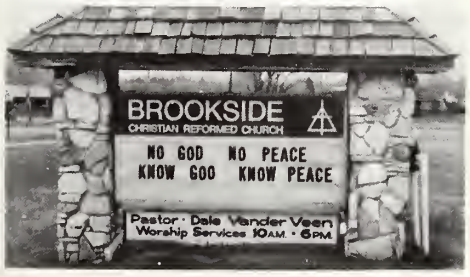
Analysis of this group was distinguishable from those who would not countenance nuclear war by their responses to the factual questions in the survey: The greatest proportion of acceptors of nuclear war were people with the fewest correct answers on the test. After completing the survey, the participants watched either a slide show or the independently produced film *The Last Epidemic*, detailing medical and other effects of nuclear conflict. Following a discussion of the presentation, people again answered the 10 opinion questions.

Nearly half of the people who originally said they thought there might be a cause worth fighting a nuclear war for changed their opinion on the retest (responding "false" to the statement "There are causes worth fighting a nuclear war for"). Only 2 percent of the original 1,215 people opposed to a nuclear war changed their position.

Since opinion on these matters changed readily in one direction, it is possible that it could change back as readily in the other direction. But the survey did show an initial change, and it is the hope of a rapidly growing number of scientists that efforts to increase knowledge about nuclear weapons and their medical effects will lead to enduring attitude change, reducing both the acceptability and likelihood of nuclear weapons use.

Are there some hints in this study that might prompt more concerned Christian groups to work on this subject? There does seem to be hope for changing people's attitudes.

*This church billboard in Michigan seems to reflect a theological position all Mennonites should also be able to endorse.*



**In a recent study** in the *Journal of Psychology* (Vol. 116), 65 psychology students at the University of Texas at El Paso were placed in three groups. All listened to the same backward recording of three well-known songs: *Revolution*, *Stairway to Heaven* and *Black Sabbath*. The first group was told to listen and write down their reactions. The second group was told to note any words they heard, while the last group was told that the tapes contained satanic messages. Only one person in the first group reported hearing a word, while virtually all subjects in the other two groups claimed they heard intelligible words and even sentences. Most (95 percent) of the students in the second group heard neutral words like "numbers" and "women," but 18 percent reported hearing words related to the devil. Of students who were told to listen for satanic messages, 41 percent claimed they heard them, and in fairly elaborate form: "My name is Satan and I rule the world," "Satan, I love you and I want you." Suggestion, say the researchers, probably plays an important role in this phenomenon. When vague and unfamiliar stimuli are presented, subjects are highly likely to accept suggestions, particularly by someone with prestige or authority.

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# NEWS

Great Trek 2

## Running a marathon . . . with brown packages

Thunder Bay, Ont.—For two Grey Goose busloads from Winnipeg it was only a one-night trip each way. Even that tested the endurance of some of us resource people as the youngsters chattered, sang and "yowled" non-stop both ways. I was fortunate to be in the less noisy bus.

VIA, Canada's national railway, brought the other 230 people from British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

Through all hours of the night 330 people, mostly teenagers from Conference of Mennonites in Canada churches, congregated at Lakehead University for Great Trek 2 (GT2) Aug. 22-25.

Some of the long-range train riders still walked in lurch-and-balance steps as they assembled for the opening session. The decibels were high during the first skit, which portrayed a young pugilist in pursuit of "where it's happening, man, that's what I'm looking for." When the leadership team entered to music from *Chariots of Fire*, the kids left no doubt they were here not only to hear but to be heard. Provincial introductions accentuated that signal.

The overall theme was "Running the Race: Looking to Jesus." Peter J. Dyck, veteran of 30 years of service with Mennonite Central Committee and now a pastor at Scottdale, Pa., and Mary Mae Schwartzentruber, co-pastor at the Stirling Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., each gave two addresses on the theme.

Attendance at GT2 was down from over 500 in 1981. Planners and participants wondered why. Peter Dyck, one of the speakers who served as storyteller at the first trek, said, "The enthusiasm seems just as great or greater, and the group seemed to 'jell' faster than last time." One Saskatchewan trekker said, "Our youth pastor thought it was only Mennonite history, so he was a little against it."

*When the gang got together, it was not readily apparent that they had kept long hours.*

The theme lent itself to many variations. Three people, Elijah McKay, native Canadian from Winnipeg, Ernest Harris, black Grenadan now teaching at Brock University and attending Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ont., and Kathleen Leenders, Salina, Kan., shared their life stories. Evaluations repeatedly referred to these testimonies as highlights. A drama group from Winnipeg, Face-to-Face, portrayed many events in running the Christian race. The feature movie, "Running Brave," told of an American Indian who overcame many human obstacles to become an Olympic runner. A smorgasbord of one-time seminars and three-consecutive-session workshops related to so many relevant aspects of the Christian race that many expressed frustration at not being able to take in more of them. Singing groups and song leaders got instant group response whenever time was given to singing.

In addition to all the scheduled events, there were hour-long, late-night hikes to

**Five Mennonite students** have completed a year-long program of urban pastoral training in Chicago. All worked in Mennonite churches during the year. The SCUPE (Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education) program in which the students were enrolled is sponsored in part by the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. It includes full-time course work related to urban ministry and 20 hours a week of internship. Chicago Area Mennonites undertook the major part of financing the intern support this past year. Donations to support this program can be sent to CAM, 18W757 22nd St., Lombard, IL 60148.

**Many church fires** could be prevented, says Fire Captain Don Cummins of Louisville, Ky. Church design, he adds, insures that any fire that breaks out in a church building will cause heavy damage; large open construction, concealed spaces, structural finish and highly combustible decorations make churches burn rapidly once they catch fire. Cummins called a sprinkler system the most desirable form of protection because it can extinguish a fire and notify the fire department at the same time.

**Over 460 congregations** of all Mennonite denominations received $72,437 in congregational project grants this year from Mennonite Mutual Aid, a 5 percent increase over the previous year. Grants are available for congregations that have at least 20 members, or half its membership, enrolled in MMA's medical plans. MMA gives $2 per member, with a minimum grant of $75.

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the nearest pizza shop, trek talk groups that went beyond scheduled hours, lounging in or by the pool and other recreational opportunities.

Some comments heard from trekkers or gleamed from their evaluations were as follows: "I hope this high lasts and people actually follow up." "I could feel God here with us the whole time." "My inspiration from Peter and Mary Mae is enough to move mountains." "These were the best four days of my summer—getting closer to God." "Praise the Lord, I have been inspired!" "The best part of GT2 was finding out that Jesus Christ is real." "I wish it'd go on three more days; there are so many seminars I'd still like to attend."

Abe Bergen, Manitoba youth worker and overall coordinator of GT2, said, "I believe GT2 is a good example of what can happen when the provincial conferences and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada work together on a project. There was a good balance of input from the various conferences in planning and in resources for GT2."

Attendance (teenagers listed) reflected some of that balance: Ontario—45, Manitoba—62, Saskatchewan—71, Alberta—24 and British Columbia—54.

"Running the race for Jesus is no sprint, it's a marathon," Peter Dyck told the trekkers. In his two talks he challenged the 258 teenagers plus 72 other adults to look seriously at what it means to be free. "If all people play their own tune, you get a 'Katzenjammer,' " said Dyck. "Freedom comes in being bound to Jesus Christ without fear." He said the apostle Paul was a servant of Christ

*"There was a man who carried a brown paper package. He tried to get rid of it but found it almost impossible."* —Mary Mae Schwartzentruber

who chose to love, who chose to serve and who chose to be himself. Therein Paul learned to "run free."

This marathon, "in the spirit of our Anabaptist ancestors," never meant *seeking* persecution. It meant for them to live by the Beatitudes. "This relates today to how we regard native Canadians, what we do with our tax dollars (Dyck confessed he withholds the military portion of his income tax) and how we do our part as peacemakers in today's world," said Dyck.

"The Bible (1 Peter) assumes faithful Christians will be persecuted," Dyck cautioned the trekkers. But Jesus liberates us to a "bound" service wherever we go. To be peacemakers, Dyck gave seven guidelines: (1) Recognize that it is today's number one issue. (2) Peace with God is the beginning; be sure to make this concrete start. (3) Never try to be a peacemaker all by yourself. (4) Be informed. (5) Join the army that sheds no blood. (6) Accept the truth that there's no possibility for peace without justice. (7) Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Mary Mae Schwartzentruber began her first presentation by holding up a small, brown package. She told of a man carrying such a package and trying to get rid of it. When he heard a sermon, "Come to me, all who . . . are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), he tried to leave the package in church. But soon the ushers caught up to him and told him that church is no place to leave packages.

Mary Mae likened this man's dilemma to that of most Christians. We carry weights with us and seemingly can't get rid of them. We long for acceptance but don't know how to be "poor in spirit . . . or how to mourn . . . or how to be meek." Somehow we want all that the world offers, but on the other hand we also want what Jesus offers. But they are in conflict. We need to learn how to be sad and how to weep without apology. If we could learn to mourn, we could also learn the joy in being comforted, Schwartzentruber told the mostly high school age teens.

"The last word" evaluations by trekkers overwhelmingly called for more Great Treks in the future. While planners expressed approval to that request, no future conference has been announced to date.

**The Swedish Ecumenical Council** has decided to set up a Christian Peace Institute in Sweden, probably in Stockholm. Ambassador Olle Dahlen says that one probable task for the institute could be to map out and analyze areas of conflict and even to participate in actual reconciliation between nations or groups.

**"Sonnenberg, Swiss Mennonites** in Ohio, 1819-1900" is the featured exhibit of the German Culture Museum of Walnut Creek, Ohio. The exhibit, which runs from June 9 to Oct. 27, includes many documents and possessions of the first settlers of Sonnenberg, a rural community near present-day Kidron, Ohio. Nearly the entire exhibit is on loan and will likely never again be available to the public after it is dismantled and returned to the owners, according to Stanley A. Kaufman, the exhibit's curator.

**Calling themselves a "peace invasion,"** 266 U.S. Christians spent two weeks in the Soviet Union June 8-21, meeting with patriarchs and pastors in 14 cities, worshiping and talking with believers of several faiths on a mission of church unity and peacemaking. Both U.S. and Soviet church leaders called peacemaking "the main challenge of our time" and said peacemaking is "an integral part of justice." Like evangelist Billy Graham in 1982 and many other Westerners in other years, the visitors found themselves accused of failing to deliver a sufficiently strong critique of life under the Soviet government.

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# Mennonites react to Pope's visit in British Columbia

Abbotsford, B.C.—From all over western Canada and the United States and even Mexico they came, some 200,000 of the devout and the curious, descending upon the airport of this midsize city located just over the U.S.-Canadian border. Many sported binoculars or cameras; most brought lawn chairs to sit out the long wait. A carnival atmosphere pervaded the huge gathering; concession stands served meals and snacks; vendors peddled souvenir books and pennants.

But the reason for this largest-ever gathering in British Columbia was one of religion, not entertainment. On Sept. 18 history was made when Pope John Paul II rewarded the scores of thousands of pilgrims with a visit to the Abbotsford Airport for an open-air Mass on the last leg of his first-of-a-kind Canadian tour.

It seemed ironic that Abbotsford had been chosen as the site for the papal Mass. Mennonites far outnumber Roman Catholics in this community of 60,000. Mennonite reaction to the papal visit had been varied, and in some cases misunderstood. A letter to the editor of the local newspaper signed by four area ministers in July expressed concern about possible excessive profiteering by local Christians in regard to the Pope's visit. This brought response from another reader who denounced the ministers for their call for public cooperation and questioned support of the papal institution such cooperation would imply.

Pastors John Dyck of Clearbrook Mennonite Brethren Church and Paul Boschman of West Abbotsford Mennonite Church, the two Mennonite signatories to the letter, explained that they felt Christians should offer their homes free of charge to visiting pilgrims rather than exploit them by asking exorbitant rooming and parking fees. Though some people interpreted this to mean support

*The Pope in his Popemobile*

of the Pope and the Catholic Church, Dyck said, "We explained that we are trying to follow scriptural principles [by showing hospitality]."

Boschman also stressed the importance of showing neighborliness to the many visitors and urged his congregation to open their homes at no lodging charge. "It bothers me that people are trying to make money on this," he said.

In addition, the parking lot of the West Abbotsford Church, which is situated on a road adjacent to the airport, was made available for overnight parking for self-contained trailer units. (Boschman's wife, Mary Ann, later reported that several did take advantage of this accommodation and were dumbfounded to learn it was free of charge. Private homes in the area were charging $80 and higher for a night's stay.)

Meanwhile, Mennonite Central Committee (British Columbia) was attempting to assure more conservative members of the constituency that it was not compromising its Christian principles. Misleading headlines in *Christian Info*, an interchurch newspaper, and in a tabloid circulated to advertise the Sept. 15 MCC Relief Sale had led many readers to believe erroneously that MCC members and other Mennonites would "break bread" with the Pope during his Canadian tour. In fact, explained MCC (B.C.) executive director Harold Koslowsky, while the Mennonite church via MCC had received an invitation by the Toronto Archdiocese to participate in an ecumenical service of praise with the Pope and had relayed the invitation to some Mennonites, MCC was not certain how many, if any, individuals would accept.

Koslowsky reported a number of phone calls from concerned people regarding the perceived Mennonite sanction of the Pope's visit, as gleaned from the tabloid headlines, and the implication that Mennonites would participate in communion with him. "The gist of the opinions was that MCC shouldn't be doing this," he said.

"MCC Canada constituents are not expected to say, sing or eat anything at the service that their conscience would not permit them to do," further explained MCC Canada executive secretary J. M. Klassen in a letter of clarification to the editor of *Christian Info*.

Negative reaction by Mennonites to the Pope's appearance took more extreme forms as well. Some expressed the belief that he represents the anti-Christ. And on a more cautious note, local clergymen had been invited to the Abbotsford service, but only a handful of Mennonite ministers could be seen in the designated area. More than one had decided not to attend on the grounds that his presence might be interpreted as alignment with the Catholic Church or the papacy.

If some Mennonites showed antipathy about the papal visit, others demonstrated indifference ("I have no desire to go out there and see him. I can do that on TV") or interest and excitement. Reasons given by some for attending the Mass included curiosity, being part of a large crowd on a historic occasion, the chance to see a celebrity in person and showing solidarity with Christian brothers and sisters despite differing beliefs. Pointing to John Paul II's strong

**Project Censored** is a media-watch organization based in California which publishes an annual list of important stories ignored by the mainline media. Censored stories of 1983 include: a U.S. Navy report that shows there have been 126 accidents involving nuclear-powered vessels in the past three decades; U.S. Department of Defense biological warfare researchers who are experimenting with gene splicing; an Oct. 5 Soviet nuclear freeze proposal which was ignored by the U.S. government; and reports that Korean Airlines aircraft had repeatedly violated Soviet airspace to gather military information prior to the attack which killed 269.

**President Reagan's policies** have widened the gap between rich and poor during the past four years and have resulted in budget deficits that could limit future economic growth, according to a report by the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan public policy research organization. Between 1980 and 1984, the share of total family income for the poorest one-fifth of the U.S. population fell by 0.7 percent, to 6.1 percent, while the shares for the richest fifth rose by 1.9 percent, to 38.9 percent. "This 1.9 percent may not at first glance seem very large, but it represents a transfer of disposable income to the top quintile . . . of $25 billion," the report said.

**To broaden its language ministry,** the American Bible Society is publishing for the first time a Scripture in Chinese for use during the Christmas season. The selection is Luke 2:1-12. A colorful cover depicts the shepherds gazing up in awe at the light from the angel which shines down on them. The same art and Bible passage will appear on a Christmas selection available in English and Spanish as well.

*Communion at papal Mass*

affirmation of the sanctity of life, one woman commented, "This man is speaking out a lot more than some of our politicians on social issues. And as head of the Catholic Church, who's to say he isn't a Christian? I'd like to think he is."

Another Mennonite affirmed John Paul as a "peace-loving person" and praised his ability to unite people worldwide.

At the papal gathering were Catholics whose awe and veneration of the Pope bordered on worship and Protestants who did not understand how so much reverence can rightly be accorded a person other than Jesus Christ himself. Not present were those who sincerely believed that even to attend the service was wrong.

A two-hour Mass conducted by the Pope followed, including a message for all on "The Heart of Christ." One of the more moving moments of the service came when the assembled were asked to give one another the greeting of peace. Catholic and Protestant alike clasped hands warmly as they bade each other, "Peace be with you," and for a moment denominational barriers were erased.

While the Anabaptist Christians present would not have agreed with all that had been done and said at the Mass that sunny Tuesday afternoon, one could not help but feel that to have been a part of this gathering led by this influential spiritual leader had nonetheless been an unforgettable and worshipful experience. *Amy Rinner Dueckman*


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For further information, write or call:
Jake Krueger
Box 552
Altona, MB R0G 0B0
(204) 324-5396
or,
Elizabeth Krueger
Box 398
Altona, MB R0G 0B0
(204) 324-5589.
More information to follow.


## Church opens center for disabled adults

Wichita, Kan. (GCMC)—The Lorraine Center, a day-care program for partially disabled adults and frail elderly, opened Sept. 4 in Wichita. Adult day care attempts to delay or avoid 24-hour care. It can enable people to remain as independent as possible and enjoy a better quality of life.

Eleanor Wiebe suggested several years ago that her congregation, Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, sponsor a center. Wiebe is director of the Wichita-based Edgerton/St. Joseph Center for Applied Research, which conducted a three-year, federally funded adult day treatment project.

Albert Siegel, a physician who conceived that project, serves as the center's volunteer medical director. He directs the physical medicine and rehabilitation program at St. Joseph's Medical Center in the city.

The Lorraine Center's director, Patricia Taylor, holds a master's degree in gerontology. "Our program stresses abilities, not disabilities. We will be treating the whole person," she said. Taylor went to San Francisco and China this summer to study programs there.

Other workers are Susan Claassen, nurse, Judy Ebersole, secretary/social services coordinator, and Marlene Hoglund, activities director. A number of volunteers will also work at the center.

Originally the church's program was to be in its building. Then the church was offered the chance to purchase a house adjacent to its facility for the center. Members are renovating and furnishing it as funds become available. In addition, the city and county provided funds and individuals are contributing.

The program can accommodate 15 people at a time; the center can accept 45 to 60 clients. Participants pay $30 per day. The center will accept Medicare, Medicaid and insurance to cover fees.

People may be referred by their doctors, hospitals and families or apply themselves. After several interviews and evaluations, a health-care plan is made.

The program offers physical, occupational, speech, music and art therapies. It monitors health and provides nursing supervision. Cognitive stimulation, recreation, socialization and a nutritious noon meal are included. *Marion Keeney Preheim*

**The ninth annual Rocky Mountain** MCC Relief Sale will be held Oct. 20 at the Arkansas Valley Fairgrounds in Rocky Ford, Colo. Mennonites from Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas, Nebraska and elsewhere come for the full-day sale to raise funds for Mennonite Central Committee. Last year's sale raised over $31,000.

**"Coping with Stress in a Pressure-Packed World"** is the subject to be addressed at the 48th annual Indiana Women's Missionary Rally, to be held Oct. 11 at 9:30 a.m. at First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. Featured speaker will be Dorothy Gish, professor of early childhood and family education at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa. She has written numerous articles and conducts seminars on self-esteem, child development, and marriage and/or singleness. Childcare will be available.

**Hit by declining sales** in developed countries, tobacco companies are turning to the developing world, where the dangers of smoking are less well publicized. "The Third World is the tobacco industry's last frontier," said Kurt Baumgartner, secretary-general of the recently held Fifth World Conference on Smoking and Health. The conference reported that over a million lives are lost prematurely because of smoking and that the hazards of smoking are so well documented that the tobacco industry scarcely bothers to deny them. They are turning to the developing world with considerable success.

## *Work camps offer chance to serve and learn*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Teenage work campers serve all the way from Portland, Ore., to Philadelphia, Winnipeg to St. Catharines, Ont. The Commission on Education designed the work camps to give young people, ages 15-18, a chance to serve others and experience group living.

The work camp started by Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church has both aspects. The teenagers mainly serve at Wheat Ridge Training School, a state institution for the severely retarded.

Wheat Ridge is one block from the church. "They are our neighbors," says Christie Lovejoy, 1984 work camp director for the Arvada Church. Work campers are assigned to the area for the profoundly retarded, the workshop for adults, a learning center for young adults or a residence hall.

The teenagers are also involved in other activities, like helping at a soup kitchen and visiting area Mennonite Voluntary Service workers. They travel to Rocky Flats, a nuclear weapons plant, for times of prayer, and the church includes them in its summer retreat.

The group learns to live together by doing chores, cooking and leading in devotions. For recreation they swim at Lovejoy's, go to the mountains and play volleyball.

Like the work camp at Arvada, the one in Portland, Ore., houses the teenagers in its church building.

It started having work campers in the mid-'70s. The teenagers painted buildings on the church property. Soon the camp director arranged for them to paint in Burnside, where the city's transients congregate. There they also served Meals on Heels, a program for walking to homes with hot meals for needy people.

"Going to Burnside helps the work campers see how the transients live and that material things in life aren't everything," says Lois Balzer, long associated with the Portland work camp.

More activities were included each year. From 1977 on they worked on home repair for Mennonite Community Service, an agency run by MVS workers.

For five years now they have worked with Snow-Cap, an emergency program providing food, clothing and shelter for the poor.

One year the group took 30 Laotian children to an out-of-town park.

This year a painting job was arranged at the Dougy Center, a place named after a boy who had died. It serves as a support home for people whose family members have died. Balzer said that they choose such places so that work campers can have personal contact while working.

The group processed 2,500 fund-raising letters for Raphael House, a home for battered women. They met people there while doing the mailing. They have also related to other homes for battered women.

In the midst of all the work the Portland work campers have time for fun. Sometimes they go to a zoo, and the church plans two or three potlucks during their stay.

With the array of activities, they hardly need more. As Balzer says, "I think most of them would say this experience is one that they never could replace." *Marion Keeney Preheim.*

## Western District calls Zehr to begin church

*Zehr*

North Newton, Kan. (WD)—Marvin Zehr, pastor of the Maplewood Mennonite Church, Fort Wayne, Ind., has accepted a call from the Western District home missions committee to begin a new church in Wichita, Kan., beginning Jan. 1, 1985. The home missions committee has been working for several years in this direction, since it considers Wichita a continuing challenge. With a population of more than 280,000, it is the largest city in Kansas and provides a variety of opportunities for evangelism and the kind of witness Mennonites can offer.

Wichita is also a place to which many Mennonites from central Kansas have moved to live, work and study. With more congregations with which to affiliate, the Mennonite witness can be enlarged and strengthened. This third Western District congregation will join Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church of the Servant in bringing an Anabaptist perspective to the questions and problems raised by an urban center with a strong military-industrial complex.

Marvin Zehr has served as pastor of Maplewood Church since 1975. Prior to that he was assistant pastor at First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind. (1961-1964), and pastor of West Zion Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan. (1964-1975). In the Central District he has served as president and as a member of the ministerial committee. In the General Conference he has served on the General Board, the Division of Administration, the ministerial committee and the board of Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

The home missions committee has invited a church in the Western District to be a sponsor and partner in mission for this new venture. This proposal is now under consideration.

**Canadian church membership** grew by just under 1 percent from 1981-82, with the Roman Catholic Church showing a small gain and the United Church and Anglican Church showing small losses, according to the *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches 1984*, published in June. The collective membership of Canada's churches recorded in 1982 rose by 154,799 to a total of 15,917,829, an increase of 0.98 percent. Meanwhile, Canadian population growth over the same period was about 1.16 percent. Figures show that in 1982, 65.7 percent of Canada's population of about 24.4 million was associated with a church.

**Members of Canadian churches** under the auspices of the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees met July 3 with senior government officials to share their hopes for Canada's refugee intake for 1985. The Canadian churches reached agreement in the request for a more generous response by the Canadian government to the increasing numbers of innocent people in the world forced to flee persecution and to the continuing needs for resettlement of large numbers of refugees living without hope in camp situations around the globe. The churches called for a refugee intake of 25,000, compared with the current 12,000.

**Children in North America** collected pencils, erasers, crayons, rulers and notebooks to send to Haitian schoolchildren. Their parents used scraps of material to sew brightly colored drawstring bags to hold the school supplies. Then Sunday school and Bible school classes worked together to assemble the kits. Over 1,000 school kits valued at $8.40 each were sent to Haiti in January as part of a larger Mennonite Central Committee material aid shipment. Children in Haiti also received health and sewing kits for use in classes.

# Del Monte on the move in the Philippines

Bukidnon, Philippines (MCC)—Del Monte is on the move again. Since the giant American-owned transnational first began to grow pineapples on the high plateau of this mountain province, it has increased its massive landholdings to an estimated 48,000 acres.

Del Monte came to the Philippines in 1926 when its Hawaiian pineapple crop was ravaged by disease. Because the Philippine constitution limits land ownership by foreigners, the company's original 20,000 acres were leased from the government.

More recently, Del Monte has acquired land by signing long-term lease agreements with local farmers. Through these lease agreements, much of the sprawling 30,000-acre Pontian Plain has come under company control since 1974. Now Del Monte is ready to expand into Impasugong Municipality of Bukidnon province.

*Laborer picks pineapples on Del Monte's 48,000-acre pineapple plantation.*

Del Monte management in the Philippines has given assurances that those in the new expansion area who do not wish to lease their land will not be pressured. But the tribal people in this new target area are nervous. Some of them have already seen company personnel taking soil samples from farmers' fields without asking permission.

The people have reason to be anxious, for they heard from neighboring villages in Sumilao that the company's powers of persuasion are forceful. One of its tactics is to pay specially hired canvassers a sizable commission according to the amount of land they can encourage farmers to lease. Frequently the canvassers are community leaders and other authority figures whom the tribal people have difficulty refusing because of cultural traditions.

Del Monte also promises jobs on the pineapple plantation to many farmers if they agree to lease. However, many of those who jump at the opportunity find themselves laid off after only several months' work. Because of high unemployment, the company can afford to keep a pool of casual laborers, thereby saving money by avoiding the higher wages and benefits to which permanent employees are entitled.

Some farmers who resist Del Monte have been pressured by other less subtle tactics. Some say they have been intimidated by armed company guards who have told them that they have no choice but to lease. Others have had roads bulldozed through their small farms. Still others have watched helplessly while Del Monte cattle were driven onto their corn fields.

Del Monte personnel have often signed lease agreements with wealthy land speculators rather than the farmers who till the soil. More than one family that has labored upon a particular plot for years has suddenly discovered that someone else with means and connections has obtained a land title to it. Several have then been accused of trespassing on land they have always believed to be theirs.

The lease agreement itself works to the company's favor and leaves the people powerless. Long and complex, it is written in English, a language that few tribal farmers can understand.

In addition, the original contract is for 10 years. But it may be extended for up to another 16 years at the sole discretion of the company. Theoretically the land should then return to its owner. But because pineapples severely deplete the soil, and because Del Monte has destroyed houses and fruit trees and other permanent crops, it is doubtful the farmers will ever work their land again.

Felix de la Cerna, an affected farmer and lay leader in the Catholic church, summed up the feelings of many: "Despite its clever propaganda, Del Monte is just another arrogant foreign corporation that neither understands nor respects the dignity or the rights of the Filipino farmer." *Esther Epp-Tiessen*


## Administrator wanted

The board of directors of **Herbert Nursing Home Inc.**, owned and operated by the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan, are seeking an administrator for this 54-bed, level 111 facility. Duties to commence tentatively **Dec. 1**.

Applicant must be mature Christian whose faith would be in harmony with those of the owning body.

Experience in long-term care would be an asset, preferably with some training in the field. The applicant should have an understanding of accounting principles, the budgetary process and computer technology. Ability to communicate in both English and German is desirable. Starting salary is negotiable.

Deadline for applications is **Oct. 15**. Direct inquiries to (306) 784-2661. Applications with full resume should be submitted to:
Albert Jahnke, chairman
Herbert Nursing Home
Box 520
Herbert, SK S0H 2A0.

**Rains have come** in some areas of northeastern Brazil, finally bringing green fields where the landscape has been brown due to drought for five years. Mennonite Central Committee workers Jim and Mary Miller of Harrisonburg, Va., report that many farmers in northeastern Brazil were able to plant and harvest good crops, although others were unable to obtain credit for seeds and fertilizer.

**Nigeria** has so far avoided the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's list of 24 countries facing food emergencies in Africa. But last year rains in Nigeria were spotty and some villagers are hungry. The local churches of Nigeria are sharing with their needy brothers and sisters. TEKAN, an umbrella organization for most of the evangelical churches in Nigeria, has called on member churches to donate foodstuffs, material and money to be distributed in the drought-affected areas. Mennonite Central Committee has supported this local interchurch effort by donating $4,000 for the purchase of food and transportation.

**A six-nation arms control initiative** that calls for a freeze on production of nuclear weapons was adopted in May by India, Mexico, Tanzania, Sweden, Greece and Argentina. The six-nation statement urges the United States, the Soviet Union and other powers to stop producing nuclear weapons and start negotiations for complete disarmament. Pope John Paul II endorsed the initiative, expressing the hope that the proposal would "receive wide acceptance and be generously supported by those who have the responsibility for promoting the cause of peace." (*New York Times*)

# RECORD

## MINISTERS

*Susan Ortman-Goering* has been called to a one-year, half-time co-pastor position at the Arvada (Colo.) Church. She began serving Sept. 1.

*John Hess-Yoder* will be ordained Nov. 4 at Peace Church, Portland, Ore.

## WORKERS

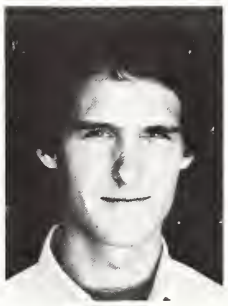
*Matthew* and *Lucy Akel* began two-year Mennonite Voluntary Service terms in July as teachers at the Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz. He has a master's degree from Cambridge (England) University. She has a bachelor's degree from Malone College in Canton, Ohio. His parents are David and Mary Akel. Hers are Edgar and Martha Snode of Mechanicstown, Ohio.

*Michael Boyts*, Rainbow Boulevard Church, Kansas City, Kan., began a two-year MVS term in May in construction work at Bacavi, Ariz. He received a degree from Hutchinson (Kan.) Community College. His parents are Harold and Bernita Boyts of Overland Park, Kan.

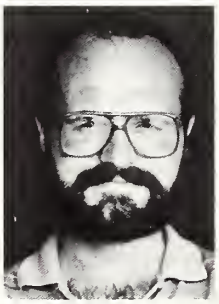
*Deanna Brugh*, Free Methodist Church, Spring Arbor, Mich., began a two-year MVS term in July as a worker in the Friendship Day-Care centers and assistant activities director in the Golden Plains Convalescent Center, both in Hutchinson, Kan. Her parents are Elisha and Marian Brugh.

*Janice Dyck*, Winkler (Man.) Bergthaler Church, will be working as a child-care worker in Beatrice, Neb., for one year. This MVS assignment began in August. Her parents are Isaac and Agatha Dyck.

*Theron Esau*, Grace Church, Enid, Okla., began a two-year MVS term in August as a youth worker for the Fresno (Calif.) Boys and Girls' clubs. He has a bachelor's degree in social work from Oklahoma State University. His parents are Harold and Leona Esau of Enid.


*Boyts*

*Brugh*


*Fitzpatrick*

*Goering*

*Esau*

*Farcas*

*David Farcas*, Gospel Fellowship, Mogadore, Ohio, was assigned by MVS to be administrative assistant for the Burnside Community in Portland for two years. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Wyoming in Laramie. His father is George Farcas of Chesterland, Ohio.

*Mark Fitzpatrick*, St. Mary's Epicopal Church, Providence, R.I., began a one-year MVS term in April as a worker in the Markham (Ill.) Community Mennonite Day-Care Center. He has a bachelor's degree from Barrington (R.I.) College. His parents are Jerome and Maureen Fitzpatrick of Seymour, Conn.

*Mark Goering* was assigned to a two-year MVS term in April. He will be working in social service for El Centro, an agency working with Hispanics in Kansas City, Kan. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas in Lawrence. His parents are Milton and Marge Goering of Derby, Kan.

*Lyle Troyer* has returned to the Bluffton (Ohio) College campus as director of the business studies center. His appointment was effective with the start of classes, Sept. 5.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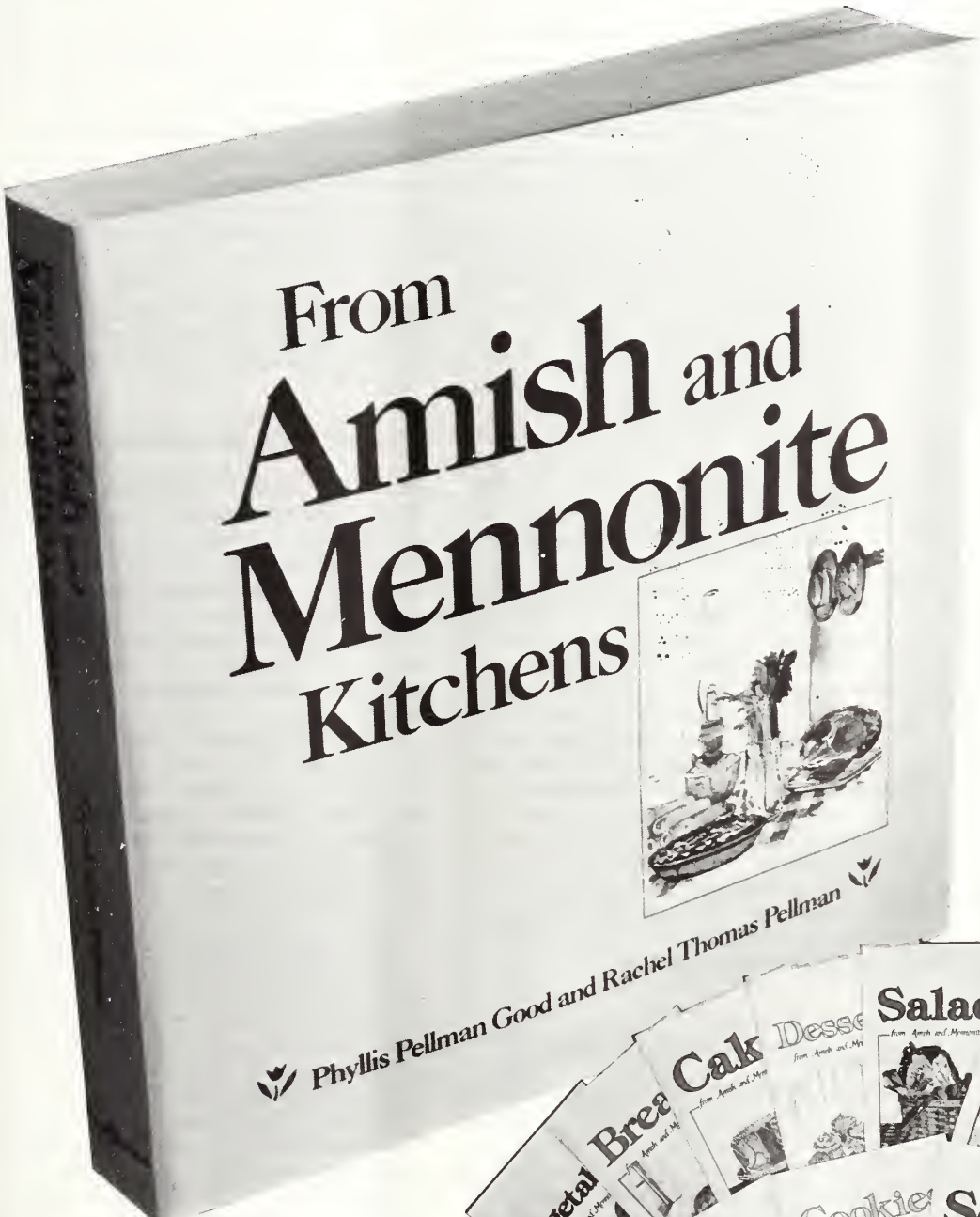


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## Concerned and disturbed

I am a Mennonite concerned with the direction the Mennonite churches are taking. I am disturbed about the underlying factor which is giving Mennonite churches their direction. That is the basis of authority—namely the Bible, God's Word.

Is the Bible no longer God's Word written in the laws of human language, absolute in authority in areas of doctrine and manner of life? No, it has become a book subject to modern religion and/or secular thought. So instead of the Bible being the absolute authority over us, the leadership of the Mennonite churches is putting the Bible under its authority. If this is not the case, how could Mennonite churches accept homosexuality as an acceptable life pattern, refuse to call sin sin, encourage insurrection toward government by not paying what is considered war tax, work toward a world peace brought on by human effort and regard personal salvation as being how much I can do for my poor neighbor?

I intend to maintain my subscription to *The Mennonite* because I want to know what is going on. However, I am going to subscribe to Ted VanderEnde's newsletter because of his biblical approach to the Mennonite issues today. *Walt Clinton, 603 Keystone Drive, Sellersville, PA 18960*

Aug. 15

## Must speak on abortion

God has laid a heavy burden on my heart concerning the subject of abortion. I see our church as a group of caring and concerned people. We strive for justice whether it be in our lifestyle or in our treatment of other people. We care about starving children in Africa, Salvadoran refugees and abused children.

Why is it we are so silent and confused on the issue of abortion? We are quick to see how the threat of nuclear war cheapens all of human life. Why can't we see as clearly that the killing of unborn babies also cheapens human life?

One place where we seem to get hung up is the woman's "right to choice" over her body. I would like to make three comments on this.

A woman does have a right to choose. She has the right to say yes or no to sexual intercourse. Saying yes to intercourse (except, of course, in the case of rape) means she is saying yes to the responsibility and privilege of a possible pregnancy. Once a new life is conceived, her right to choice is over.

Secondly, it is a fallacy that her choice is over her body. An unborn child, while relying on her for nourishment, is a separate physical entity. Even if the unborn child was a part of her body, would she choose to cut off a perfectly healthy arm or leg?

Thirdly, I see the idea that a woman somehow has a right to kill another human being as a step backward in human rights. Years ago a man's wife was his property. He could beat and abuse her because she belonged to him. Thank goodness we no longer feel this way. But isn't this the same type of attitude present in saying a woman should have a choice to kill an unborn baby? Once that child is born and the mother were to hurt it in any way, we would scream in horror that it was child abuse.

I would encourage the General Conference to continue its heritage of caring and justice for all people by making a statement condemning the mass murder of unborn children.

But this is not enough. What we need are positive ways to stop the cause of abortion. Abortion is only a symptom of a society which cheapens life and which has thrown out all moral restraints on sexuality. A beginning would be to encourage young people to say no to sexual intercourse outside of a committed relationship.

This is not a simple issue. I say all of this not out of moral superiority but out of the knowledge that I and all people need the forgiveness which is ours through Jesus Christ. I say it mostly because I can no longer be silent. Let us add justice for the unborn to our long list of things to care about. I pray long and hard that God will prosper our efforts to serve him. *Elizabeth Claassen, 615 Pommer, Moses Lake, WA 98837*

Aug. 28

## *The Mennonite* and politics

As a longtime member of a General Conference Mennonite Church (Reedley, Calif.) I object to your use of *The Mennonite* in presidential election politics. I refer to the anti-Reagan propaganda in Hubert Brown's article (Aug. 14 issue). I am sure Canadian Mennonites would not let you use *The Mennonite* to influence Mennonite voters for elections in Canada. You are violating the age-old Mennonite principle of separation of church and state.

How do you expect Republican Mennonites to support directly or indirectly the General Conference if a journal supported by the General Conference is used in the democratic presidential election campaign? Please respond. *G. Henry Schmitt, 1249 Quail Court, San Bernardino, CA 92404*

Aug. 21

*Editor's note: Brother Schmitt refers to comments quoted in the Mennonite Biblical Seminary insert. These were made as part of Brown's seminary commencement address. The seminary felt it should be shared.*

*We have invited writers to comment on both the Canadian and the U.S. elections. And we certainly don't tell them which side to take.*

*If we base our support for the General Conference strictly on its magazine speaking only what each reader already likes and believes, we are indeed in sad shape.*

## Prayer-safe is real need

In the '60s we were introduced to the term "fail-safe," which refers to a mechanism built into an electronic system or military command structure for insuring safety in the event of a breakdown or malfunction. It was used most often in reference to a system of coded military controls whose purpose was to prevent an accidental launching of a nuclear attack.

Today we are hearing about a new form of fail-safe named Strategic Defense Initiative, referred to by some as Star-Wars, which is supposed to protect us from a nuclear strike by constructing an impenetrable barrier against ballistic missiles—a space-based Maginot line.

Ignoring for the moment the futility of such a project (as ballistic missile defense takes shape, so too will the means necessary to assure it will not work), there is an almost profane arrogance about relying on human technology to deliver us from the threat posed by our inability to control that technology. Nothing is foolproof but the power and saving grace of God. It is on this power that we should rely and to this grace that we should appeal.

What is needed is not fail-safe but prayer-safe, an international network of people from all the world's religions gathering publicly or kneeling privately to pray to him to "be not exceedingly angry" whenever there is an international crisis that threatens to get out of control, to petition him, in effect, to save us

from ourselves. *Duane Johnson, Box 283, Moundridge, KS 67107*

Aug. 28

## Encourage Holy Land visits

It has come to my attention that Jake Friesen is encouraging churches to make it possible for their pastors to take a trip through the Holy Land.

I wish I knew the proper words to tell what this could mean to them, plus spouses where possible. It is better than a year in seminary. It makes the Bible come alive in many meaningful ways. I know they'll never be the same.

Better yet, why not have some members of the churches accompany their pastors?

I only wish that this opportunity had come my way 50 years ago. *William H. Stauffer, Stonecreek, OH 43840*

Aug. 29

## Are computers a help?

I've been thinking about your two recent articles on the computer in the church and home by Kenneth and Anne Rupp (July 17 and July 31 issues). While they do acknowledge that "the use of a computer still leaves many questions," I don't feel that these questions have been adequately raised or addressed. They mention, for example, "What will we do with all the time and energy we have saved?" But there are even more basic questions.

Is it good stewardship to own a personal computer for home or church? A computer is soon followed by programs and discs and special filing boxes for the discs and computer books and printer and modem. Do we want to take part in this one-thing-leads-to-another consumption? Or is our money better used elsewhere?

Will we really save time and energy? How long will it take to recopy all one's recipes onto a computer file? Is there a "low technology" solution to the hand-cramping letter writing the Rupps mention? Why not spread out one's personal letter writing over the year rather than doing it all at once? How long does it take to put a disc in the computer and find a telephone number? (This is one example where a paper system is cheaper, faster and portable as well.)

In the church, does the computer really simplify administrative workload or does it tend to multiply it? It seems the *ability* to keep better and more statistics encourages the *keeping* of more statistics than we would otherwise. How much statistical analysis do we really need? And do we really want the church to send out yet more "personalized" form letters?

For me, all these questions (and more) have not yet been resolved, although in our home we do have a (blush) computer. I share my living space with it somewhat reluctantly and uneasily. There is no doubt that a computer with the proper accessories can do *some* things more efficiently. But what things? And at what price? *April Yamasaki, 307-2820 Birch St., Vancouver, BC V6H 2T6*

Aug. 30

## The Mennonite game

I was one of the over 3,000 people from the United States and Canada to attend Mennonite World Conference in Strasbourg. I was moved by the inclusiveness of our faith, evidenced by the hearty participation of sisters and brothers from many nations.

At the same time I was troubled by the sharing of a new friend in our tour group, a first-generation Mennonite. She doesn't feel this inclusiveness in her congregation.

The family came to a Mennonite church because of our peace and discipleship position. They feel left out:

1. By the "Mennonite game." Can we suppress our urge to see if Tom is a cousin of Sarah, especially if those around us aren't involved?
2. By the lack of inclusion in holiday gatherings in their church. Families tend to entertain their own. Newcomers and transplants are lonely and get tired of being excluded.
3. By not having been considered for any church office even though they've attended for years and are capable, professional people. Nominees, she shared, usually have a "right ship" background (they came from Europe on a ship with other Mennonites).

In the spirit of MWC, can we open our churches and our hearts to such searching friends better than we have in the past? Can we recognize they too possess elements of the truth? Will our new friends still be Mennonites when MWC convenes in Winnipeg in 1990? *Name withheld by request*

Sept. 6


## Librarian needed

**The Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries** invite applications for the position of head librarian, beginning **summer 1985** if possible. Desired qualifications include a Masters of Library Science degree and a theological education.

Please send resume, including names of references to:
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# Sing them over again

*Elmer Suderman*

We have to say some important things over and over to be sure we understand them. We have to say some important things over and over to not forget them. We have to tell those we love not once, not just every day, but many times a day. Love is a mystery so marvelous that saying it once is not enough. Love takes our breath away and we stand in awe of love all our life. So we say "I love you" over and over to those we love and never get tired saying it, never get tired hearing it.

And we find new ways to say it. We say it with flowers, with gifts, with thoughtful acts. But again and again we say it in the simple words, some of the most familiar words in the language: "I love you." Finally, we say it without words, say it with a look, a gesture. Forsaking words, we say "I love you" with the silence only lovers understand.

And those simple human words so precious to us remind us that at the heart of the biblical message is the simple three-word affirmation: "God is love." There are no more moving words in human language than to say to someone, "I love you." How much more moving in divine language it is to know that the God we worship—the holy, awesome God, the God of Israel, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the creator of the world, the all-powerful one—is also the God whose best name is love, that simple, warm, human word.

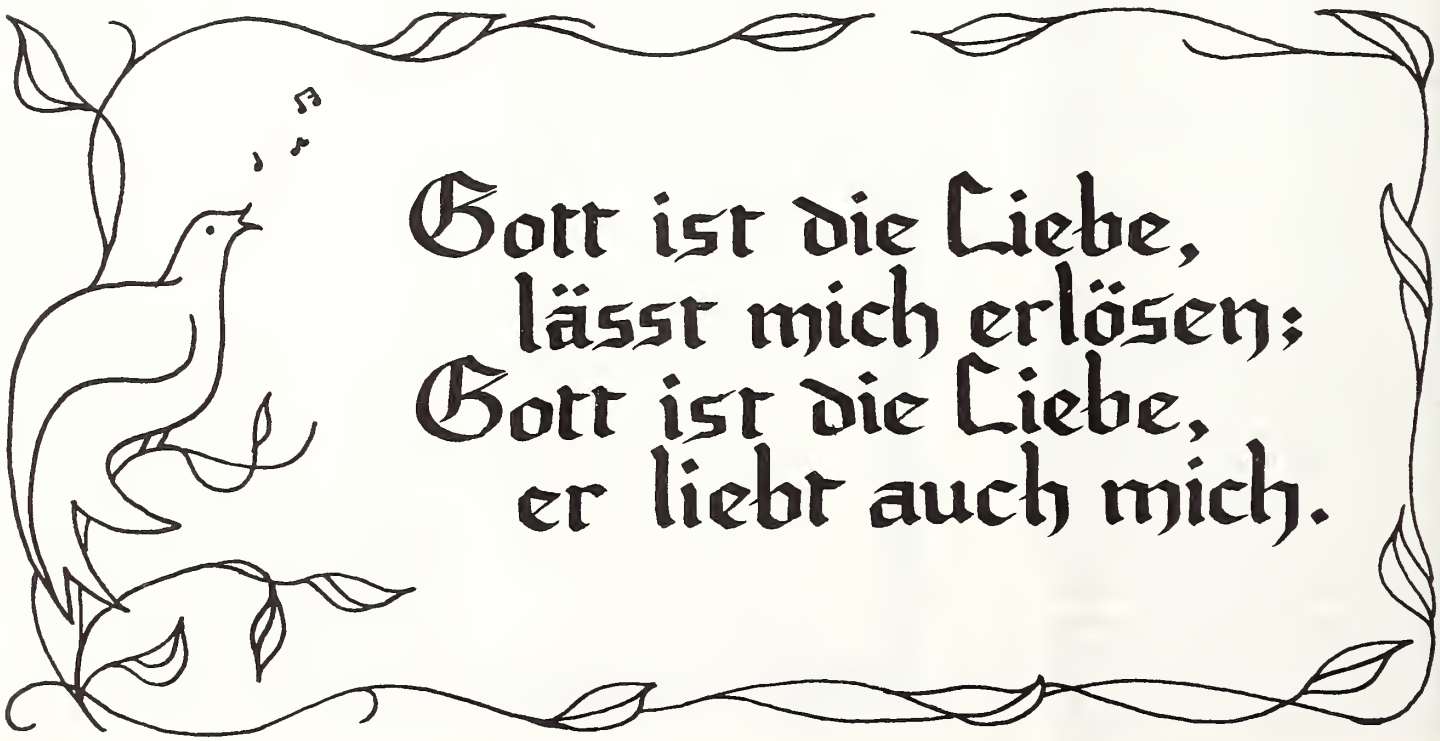
I learned that truth in Sunday school when one of the first songs we sang was the simple melody with the simple words, "Gott ist die Liebe, lässt mich erlösen; Gott ist die Liebe, er liebt auch mich." The English translation goes, "For God so loved us; he sent the savior: For God so loved us, and loves me too." It's not quite the way it is in German, where the first line is simply, "God is love." What I remember about the song is that line and another line: "God loves me too."

I liked the song then. It told me what I've had to say over and over in my life to make sure I understand it. God is love. He loves me too. There is so much in those simple statements that I can never say them often enough. Once a day isn't enough. Many times a day does not exhaust their meaning.

Since I heard the simple song and learned to sing it close to 60 years ago now, I've heard many other more profound, more complicated songs and poems of other ways to say what the song and the Bible say in three words: God is love. We live in the presence of that love. We know that God is love because he sent the savior because he loved us.

No matter how much we read, no matter how much skill we have in language, no matter how much others have, in the end we come back to the simple statements that God is love and loves me too.

I still like the simple song, and when I heard thousands of Mennonites gathered from all parts of the world, Mennonites of many colors and countries who did not always understand each other—even their languages were different—singing in their own language the simple words, "Gott ist die Liebe, lässt mich erlösen: Gott ist die



Liebe, er liebt auch mich," I was deeply moved. After 60 years the song and its words had lost none of their appeal, had indeed with the passing of time come to mean something richer and deeper than they had when I first sang the song with my friends in that small country church in Oklahoma.

I stopped singing to hear the rich harmonies of people, all of whom had reason to doubt that God is love, many of whom had suffered in their faith. They came even from Russia, where the church and its members have had to pay a price for their faith, a price which none of us quite understand or have experienced. And yet all of us for all the differences that separated us were able to sing with whole hearts and full voices that simple affirmation: God is love. And we were all able to agree that he is our savior. And we were all able to agree that he loves each of us. He knows us by name, he numbers the hairs of our heads, he watches the sparrows fall and is concerned with all of us. That is not a difficult faith, but it is a profound one. It is one we must repeat over and over. We must sing it in our songs, pray it in our prayers, live it in our lives. Not once a day, not every hour, but every minute, every second. His love touches every one of us—even me.

*We all sometimes stumble over the rubble of the world and wonder how in all this chaos there can be an order—a spirit of love running through the world.*

That is not always easy to believe. When we are sick we wonder if God is love. When life is fractured for us, when we look in the mirror and see someone who doesn't look like us, we wonder whether God is love. When we can't sleep at night and the world doesn't make any sense and we can't make any sense out of the world, we wonder if we can say God is love. We look at our lives and they don't always make sense.

We look at the world, a world in which we propose to spend more money in the next five years to find better and more efficient ways to kill people than we would have spent if we had spent $2 million dollars every day since the birth of Christ, or over $83,333 for every hour since the birth of Christ, or over $1,388 for every minute or $23 for every second since the birth of Christ. At the same time we reduce our aid to the poor, leaving us with the impression that the function of government is not to help its people but to kill people. And we still say, "God is love; he loves me too."

*It can move you to tears when you see someone who would seemingly have little reason to believe God loves him or her, yet there comes the sweet music of affirmation that God cares for each one of us.*

It isn't easy to make that affirmation. It isn't easy for those who are cold, for those who live in rooms where the winter icicles form on the inside of windows and helpless people sit shivering or pacing back and forth wearing what worn overcoats and blankets they can get. How can they say, "God is love; he loves me too"? It is hard for them. It is even hard for us.

But it is exactly such people who have often said that God is love. Jesus said it from the cross. He was ready to forgive. He was ready to pray even for his enemies and to recognize that God did forgive them.

We all sometimes stumble over the rubble of the world and wonder how in all this chaos there can be an order—a spirit of love running through the world. And yet we know even in our darkest moments that there is.

The old song reminds us to say it over and over. We need to in times like these. We need to say it with thanksgiving in our hearts, with a recognition that if we look around us we can see everywhere evidences of the love of God in the world, in our lives and in ourselves. We carry his love. We live and breathe his love. We taste his love every day. So let's say it over and over, say it once more and then say it again: God is love; he loves even me.

*Elmer Suderman is a professor at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN 56082.*

# Strasbourg from an ecumenical perspective

Representatives of Mennonite churches in 50 nations came forward in slow step during roll call at the opening ceremonies of the 11th Mennonite World Conference July 24-29.

Words of welcome and greeting spoken in five languages by MWC vice president Carl Bruesewitz (the Netherlands) pointed out the cross-cultural nature of the meeting. "We rejoice at the beginning of this congress that this is not a European or an American conference but really a world congress," he said. "Many more brothers and sisters from Europe are attending than we at first anticipated, and fewer have come from North America. There is a good balance."

Nevertheless, first registration figures showed that about half came from the United States and Canada. Registration totaled nearly 6,200 as the conference opened. Hundreds of additional registrations were expected before the weekend was over, mainly of European Mennonites. About 400 came from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

MWC president Charles Christano (Indonesia) spoke on "confessing our hope," one aspect of the conference theme, "God's People Serve in Hope." "In its original meaning, hope had nothing to do with elusive and unfounded expectation," he noted. "On the contrary, it is something certain, based on him who is faithful and able to accomplish to perfection."

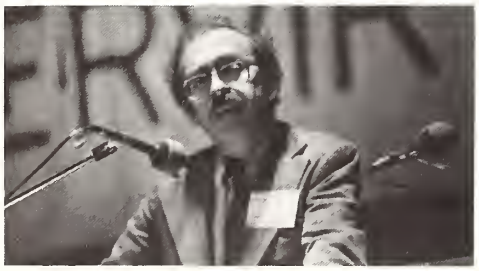
Christano expressed gratitude for the rich heritage of the early Anabaptists, predecessors of the Mennonites, but reminded conference participants that their faith must be active and relevant as "the world staggers in its hopeless course."

"Let's make the old city of Strasbourg another historical site," he declared. "If from 1554 to 1607 Strasbourg had the privilege of hosting the early conferences, let's make the 11th assembly of MWC a historic event where we, as the new generation of Mennonites and Brethren in Christ, deliberate our confession of hope."

*As the thousands of Mennonites began to assemble at Strasbourg, it was not unusual to see people looking in all directions with wonder and amazement.*

*This photo includes (left to right): Laura Loewen, Edmonton; Peter Wiebe, Helen Wiebe and Marge Wiebe of Winnipeg.*

*Ronald Sider issued the most provocative challenges to the MWC gathering on how to be God's people serving in hope.*



In his address "Who Are We?" Robert Kreider (United States), MWC recording secretary, noted that not all Mennonites look alike. "We live in 57 nations and speak 100 languages, yet we are a family bonded together."

Recalling centuries-old ecumenical scars, the executive committee of the Lutheran World Federation, meeting in Budapest, sent a message noting that Lutheran professions of faith "also became a factor in the maltreatment of other Christians by our forebears. . . ." The committee continued, "We Lutherans can neither identify with nor condone such actions, and we deeply regret the suffering unjustly inflicted on those who are your fathers and mothers in the faith."

The Lutheran statement added that "in spite of our theological differences concerning holy baptism, we wish to express our willingness to overcome the condemnations of the past . . . we desire to heal the wounds of the past not only for the sake of our reconciliation within the people of God, but also to strengthen the credibility of our common Christian witness that the world may believe."

A reply from the MWC executive committee expressed "gratitude for those dialogues which have been initiated . . . which have resulted in a reciprocal awareness of the particular heritage of each, and our common vocation in faith and witness."

Among the other major presenters at the MWC were John Toews and Hugo Zorilla, professors of New Testament at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Calif., speaking jointly on "Who Are God's People?" and Takio Tanase, director of the Eastern Hokkaido Bible School (Japan) and Gilberto Flores, president of the Guatemala Mennonite Church, speaking separately on "God's People Witnessing."

A team of three delivered an address on "God's People Serving"—Georgine Boiten du Rieu, pastor, social worker and city mission worker in Amsterdam; Elke Huebert, social worker in Ingolstadt (Federal Republic of Germany); and Willi Wiedemann, pastor of the Weierhof Mennonite Church (FRG).

Ronald J. Sider, associate professor of theology at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, and a joint member of Brethren in Christ and Mennonite congregations, spoke on "God's People Reconciling," with a response by Sjouke Voolstra, theology professor at Mennonite Seminary, Amsterdam. Two sermons were given at the final conference service—by Emma Richards, pastor of the Mennonite congregation in Lombard, Ill., and Samuel Gerber, former director of the Bienenberg Bible School, Liestal (Switzerland).

According to MWC statistics, there are currently 724,000 Mennonites in the world, including 107,300 in Africa, 113,600 in Asia, 100 in Australia, 76,800 in Central and South America, 92,400 in Europe (including the Soviet Union), and 333,800 in Canada and the United States.

*Reprinted from the Ecumenical Press Service, Aug. 7, 1984*

# MEDITATION

## Sincere thanks

Sometimes I feel like fainting when someone says thank you. Those two words are about as rare today as a Model T Ford. But worse than not hearing an occasional thank you is to hear it from insincere lips.

Like the "automated" cashier at our local supermarket who rings up the groceries, takes my money and says, "Thank you for shopping at _____." I can tell she doesn't mean it because of the wearisome tone of her voice. And because she's looking toward the next customer as she speaks.

Expressing thanks was also rare in Jesus' day. Remember the 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus? Only one came back to say thank you.

As Christians, our "company policy" is "in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18a). We are to be thankful people in conversations with others and in our prayers to God. Indeed, we who have been redeemed and enjoy the living presence of Christ in our lives have every reason to give thanks. We of all people should find it easy to sincerely say, "Thank you."

The apostle Paul was thankful for his brothers and sisters in Christ (Acts 28:15), for the unspeakable gift of Christ (2 Corinthians 9:15), for victory through Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57), for the ministry given to him by God (1 Timothy 1:12) and for the spiritual growth in believers (Colossians 1:3-5).

To the Philippians Paul wrote, "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." He told the Ephesians to turn from worthless speech to thankful speech (5:4). Paul goes even further. Giving thanks is to be not only associated with our prayers and speech, it's to flow from us in all that we do (Colossians 3:17).

Like the person at the checkout counter, we can become careless and cold in our giving of thanks. We can mouth words without expressing true gratitude.

So how do we stay fresh and genuine in giving thanks? How do we keep from expressing automated gratitude?

We can begin by building a thankful prayer life. If we nourish a thankful attitude toward God, we will find ourselves overflowing with thankfulness in our relationship to his creation. The beauties of the world, the kindnesses of people and the various events of life will provide countless opportunities for us to say, "Thank you."

Before launching into your prayer to God, spend a few moments meditating on his greatness and goodness. By focusing your thoughts on him you'll become freshly aware of how worthy he is to receive your gratitude.

Next consider the blessings you have received from the Lord. James tells us that "every good gift . . . is from above" (1:17). Enumerate some of the good things that have happened to you. You have eternal life. You have a God who guides you day by day.

Now, having considered his goodness and having counted your blessings, begin to express your gratitude item by item. Be specific. You might even keep a list where you can add new blessings as they come to mind.

Finally, every so often devote your entire prayer to thanksgiving. Ask for nothing. Simply thank God for every gift you can recall. The experience will revitalize you. You'll begin to discover the lift of thanksgiving. And you'll begin to express genuine gratitude in every area of your life.

*G. Roger Schoenhals*

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Some people look at today's world and note the multiplication of despair. There are many needs.

Christians first look at their lives and exclaim, "God's grace is sufficient for me and therefore for all people in the world."

This is Thanksgiving time in Canada. As we all give sincere thanks for the sufficient grace of God, let us open our hearts, minds and souls with compassion for those who are lost, hurting and hungry. Let us especially notice those who are closest to us but then also enlarge our circles around God's globe.


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# editorial

## *He became poor*

I did not want to write this editorial, but I have to do it.

The facts stare at me. Children with bloated stomachs, people with eyes deep in their sockets yet clearly focused on all who call ourselves after Jesus Christ. Bodies emaciated and aged beyond what's reasonable for their years. Their number increases even as we plan our special feasts for Thanksgiving, anniversaries, weddings, birthdays and the holy days of Christmas.

"What could easily be the worst famine of the 20th century is devastating 24 African countries. . . . The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that 150 million people will be affected this year" (*Christianity Today*, Aug. 10, 1984, p. 52). There are 34 million people living below the poverty line in the United States (*Catholic Agitator*, July 1984, p. 2). "One of India's leading nutritionists has said that all but 3 million of the 23 million children born in India in 1983 will be physically and mentally impaired by malnutrition . . . 3 million will die before they reach the first year. . ." (*Actionews*, August 1984, p. 11). "According to the International Labor Organization 1.25 billion people are seriously poor and 700 million destitute . . . 42 percent in Asia, 39 percent in Africa and 27 percent in Latin America live in . . . absolute poverty" (Stivers, *Hunger, Technology and Limits to Growth*, p. 31).

I know such numbers are numbing and easily become a guilt trip for a little while, only to leave us feeling helpless and with few alternatives but to continue as before. It doesn't help to know "there is enough food to feed everybody in the world now; in the year 2000 there will still be enough food for everyone" (*The Christian Century*, May 23, 1984, p. 550). The feeling of anger knots in my stomach. What's the use?

Food distribution and global justice are possible. But the progress is sinfully slow. India has been having a healthy agricultural growth rate of 2 percent annually. In 1982 alone they irrigated 57 million hectares. Yet less than one-third of India's 576,000 villages have all-weather road connections.

Does it help for us to feel more guilty? What can we do?

There are at least half a dozen stories inside this issue which go beyond guilt-tripping. Hosting the Virginias, adopting the Nolans, giving in the spirit of the Krehbiels, living beyond the rules and into the hope of faith, affirming that we'd rather get off the nuclear bandwagon and give up our lives so that others might know the self-giving love of Christ, repeating God's forgiving love over and over—all are signs of sincere thanksliving that you and I can share.

Yes, Jesus says, ". . . you always have the poor with you. . ." (Matthew 26:11a).

Jesus also says, ". . . When you give a dinner . . . do not invite your friends . . . invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. . ." (Luke 14:12-14).

The crunch for me is Paul's word about Jesus, ". . . though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

You and I can be rich and also poor. In fact, to follow Christ we must also become poor. James Cohen in *God of the Oppressed* reminds us that God chose an oppressed people for doing his theology. He took the nature of the powerless to initiate his new mission of salvation and liberation.

Michael Foley writes in *Sojourners* (September 1983, pp. 20-22) about "The Poverty of Enough." He believes God is not asking you and me to become Francis of Assisi but to covenant our faith living on the basis of enough for our needs rather than for our wants as pornographically titillated by *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Outdoor Living*.

Enough is always room for one more. Enough is readiness to once more let the images of famine open our purses to Mennonite Central Committee and missions. Enough is to take one decisive new personal step toward justice, love and forgiveness for all people.

Enough is to discover what the lame man (Acts 3) learned from Peter. He got no silver and gold, but Peter gave what he had. The man got "enough" to be healed, and he went leaping, singing and praising God.

We have more than our share and more than enough. Jesus became poor with us to save us. He sits on God's right hand.

You and I can begin to settle for enough. It will lift our spirits closer to God's Spirit. *Bernie Wiebe*

THE MENNONITE

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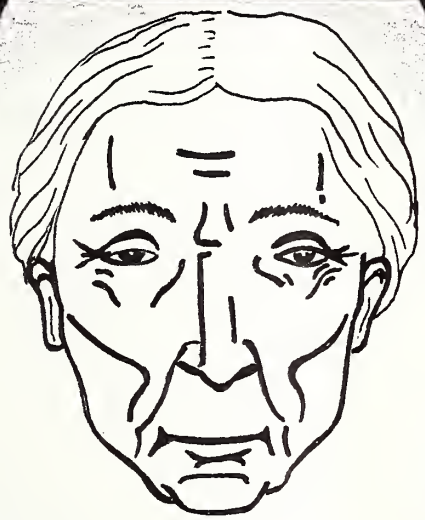

# Anabaptists and ongoing Reformation

*J. Denny Weaver*

Bethlehem '83 showed that Mennonites have learned to live with pluralism. There was singing with and without instruments. Minutes were kept. Some

*As in other new movements, there was a variety of beginnings with diverse origins and impetuses. And they weren't all pacifist.*

wore coverings, more did not. People with opposing views of Scripture discussed sexuality or social justice with a sense of belonging to a basic Mennonite entity even as they disagreed on what that meant. Then in a spine-tingling—at least it was for me—communion service, unthinkable even within the living memories of many of those present, this pluralism culminated in a feeling of oneness symbolized by worship and exchange of embraces as well as common participation in the elements.

A comment from a recent colloquium in which I participated at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries on the subject of Mennonite systematic theology can describe this situation nicely: "It is probably impossible to write *the* Mennonite systematic theology, but there will be a variety of systematic theologies from Anabaptist-Mennonite perspectives."

Another kind of acceptance of pluralism has happened in the study of Mennonite history. The last decade has seen the crystalization of a new era in the interpretation of Anabaptist origins. This newer perspective argues that rather than beginning in one particular place with a unified vision, Anabaptism was actually a varied movement, not entirely pacifist, with several different beginning points and diverse intellectual and political origins. A basic summary of writings that represent this new point of view is found in the article "From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: the Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins" by James M. Stayer, Werner O. Packull and Klaus Deppermann in *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, April 1975. While Mennonite scholars have played key roles in spelling out the new view and its acceptance is well-known to the readers of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, this new perspective has not been well told in our congregations.

The discussion of the newer perspectives has not moved far beyond academic circles. For example, it does not appear in either the historical sections of the Foundation Series nor in *The Mennonite Story*, a lesson series on Mennonite history from Faith and Life Press. Yet I think that this revised view of Anabaptist origins is important for our self-understanding as contemporary Mennonites. Here are some of the implications of this revised version of Anabaptism.

In order to separate Anabaptism from 16th-century revolutionary movements, the older view, especially as developed by Harold S. Bender, argued that it began in Zurich under the leadership of Conrad Grebel as a purely religious movement with the Bible as its only significant source. According to Bender in his volume on *Conrad Grebel*, Ulrich Zwingli was the only individual to exert significant influence on Grebel, and that influence was principally "to point him to the Scripture . . . [Thus] the Bible was the chief source of the theology of Conrad Grebel and the Swiss Brethren."

In Bender's view, Anabaptists emerged as the 16th-century individuals most serious about following Jesus and heeding the message of Scripture. Thus they appear by definition as sincere and open to God's truth, in contrast to Zwingli, Luther and others who hear and heed merely human opinion or compromise God's truth. Bender writes, for example, in *The Anabaptist Vision* that when Luther and Zwingli followed the medieval pattern of a mass church, "the reformers surrendered their original purpose and abandoned the divine intention."

The newer scholarship has found at least six distinct 16th-century Anabaptist movements and three points of origin. According to Stayer, Packull and Depperman, "The six major Anabaptist groups would be the Swiss Brethren, . . . the followers of [Hans] Hut, the Central German Anabaptists, the *Stäbler* (pacifist) sects in Moravia, the Marpeck circle and the heterogeneous Melchiorite tradition (Menno Simons became the leader of one part of this group) . . . the three more or less independent points of departure for Anabaptist history were South German Anabaptism, the Swiss Brethren and the Melchiorites."

In addition to their religious characteristics, these movements displayed a variety of social and economic and political causes as well as influence from monasticism, humanism, mysticism, nominalism and asceticism. For some of those steeped in the tradition of Bender, the description of these multiple origins and the disappearance of a unified theological movement may seem like a betrayal of the received faith.

The revisionist perspective actually places Anabaptist origins and ideas on the same value level as other traditions. Anyone who studies history can explain these origins for all movements. Anabaptist origins and ideas play in the same historical arena as other movements, with the questions of sincerity and obedience and truthfulness removed to another level for all traditions. With all traditions placed on the same historical footing while evaluations of truth are removed to another level, ecumenical discussions can have a less emotional beginning point and more common understandings. The new perspective is thus an ally in ecumenical and cross-cultural discussions.

To make the same point another way, the recent scholarship distinguishes more clearly than did the Bender generation between causes and influences in this historical realm, on the one hand, and those things which fall into the realm of faith on the other. Recent scholarship has shown, for example, that the idea of a free church did not arrive full blown when Grebel's Zurich circle read the Bible. Rather it developed over a period of time after Anabaptists failed in their attempts to form a mass church.

In this situation where there were competing claims to truth, it became a confession of faith then to accept the emerging Believers' Church model rather than the traditional mass church as the most biblical or as the

*"We still have to decide continually, together, in a fresh, new way what following Jesus, community and peace look like in the 1980s."*

most faithful way to follow Jesus. The newer perspective enables us to understand the various developments and to observe the people involved without assuming that representatives of the state church system were by definition insincere or willing compromisers of the gospel. We have long recognized the human elements in Luther's reformation. Revisionist scholarship shows similar human elements in the Anabaptist movement.

Revisionist scholarship has thus removed our 16th-century ancestors from their pedestals and placed them on the ground beside us. Moderns are now as conscious of the foibles of 16th-century figures as of their own. Decisions are made in the same way by people of both eras—by trial and error, in specific historical situations, with much searching and testing since all situations contain ambiguity. Both past and present people seek to discover for their own time and place the shape of God's people, what it means to follow Jesus and the way to make visible the kingdom of God. In the new era I am more comfortable with my genuinely human ancestors and their fallible thought than with the heroic figures and pure theology identified by the earlier vision.

The Bender generation saw a threefold division of history, common to the self-perception of many movements—religious as well as non-religious. The three eras of history begin with an original golden age, followed by a dark or middle age which loses the original vision. Then comes a period of restoration of the original vision. Bender's Anabaptist vision saw the church of the first century as having been lost and then rediscovered by Anabaptism in the 16th century. Lost again in the centuries following the Reformation, Mennonites were once more called to recover the vision in the 20th century.

Anabaptism was thus considered a finished model to be recovered and copied in the present. Particularly in popularized versions of the Bender perspective, 16th-century Anabaptists were held up as prophetic models. The modern heirs to that tradition were called to measure themselves against the heroic model of the spiritual ancestors, to adopt their program and to partake of their courage in carrying it out. Most of us learned we did not measure up to the earlier heroic standard. Walter Klaassen has written of those who engage in "breast beating" and "wallow in guilt" for having failed to uphold the heroic model. The perspective of the heroic vision is to the past. It is essentially an attitude of conservation. It assumes a past, finished product which must be recovered and preserved.

In the revisionist perspective, standing in the Anabaptist tradition must bring a feeling quite different from restoring the finished Anabaptist vision. Given the multiple origins and differing early visions and impulses, one can no longer focus on vision to be recovered and preserved. Rather, one confronts a number of impulses, some in conflict with each other, all of which continue to influence contemporary life and thought in varying ways. To take seriously all the elements which comprise the tradition means a refusal to absolutize any one set of them. They all comprise part of the story, teaching both positively and negatively.

These multiple impulses force today's church to be present and future oriented. The past provides direction and orientation, but present and future needs and problems dictate the agenda and the focus of questions to be asked. This is essentially a liberal outlook, that is, one which accepts change, ambiguity and plurality. It assumes that the movement is never finished but is always in a state of becoming Anabaptist or of re-forming the Anabaptist heritage. Thus the advent of the new era in the understanding of Anabaptist origins means switching from the idea of recovery to the principle of continual formation and reformation of the heritage.

**Not a product but a process.** While the new perspective leaves us without clear or definitive role models and historical examples, we do inherit something from the past, namely a movement in the process of being formed. A vital core of handed-down ideas includes discipleship, the communal nature of the church, and love and non-resistance. Without ties to the past we could not use historically located designations such as Christian or Anabaptist or Mennonite. What the recent scholarship has made clear, however, are the many forms these ideas have taken as they were carried along by a variety of Anabaptist and Mennonite traditions. While knowledge of these forms is an inherently necessary part of understanding who we are and how we got here, it does not tell us what to do now. We still have to decide continually, together, in a fresh, new way what following Jesus, community and peace look like in the 1980s.

This state of continual reformation of the Anabaptist tradition has always been the case, whether or not Mennonites have adequately recognized their engagement in the task. In fact, I think engaging in this task of reformation is itself one aspect of faithfulness. It reveals concern to follow Jesus as closely as possible in the current context. Thus, rather than recovering the Anabaptist vision we are called and compelled continually to forge new versions of the vision.

Although we learn from the experiences of our spiritual ancestors, as they did, we also live and work on the cutting edge. It is an anxious as well as an exhilarating experience.

Bethlehem '83 was for me both a recognition of Mennonite diversity and a celebration of unity in the common task of discovering what it means to be God's people today. We should not feel guilty about past divisions as though they were a departure from a unified golden age. Rather, we should recognize that diversity of vision has always existed. Thus a unified Anabaptist vision has been and continues to be not so much a past fact but something toward which we can strive together. •

# Who are we?

*Robert Kreider*

At the Mennonite World Conference in Wichita in 1978 we saw that not all Mennonites look alike, speak the same language, dress alike, eat the same foods, or talk about their faith in the same way. Our president in 1978 was from Africa and in 1984 is from Asia.

In 1912, when Heinrich Pauls of Lemberg in Poland proposed the idea of a world conference of Mennontes, 90 percent of all Mennonites spoke German and lived in 15 countries: in Europe—Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Poland and Russia, with a few in France and Luxembourg; in North America—Canada and the United States; in Latin America—none; in Africa—Nigeria, Rhodesia and the Congo (Zaire); and in Asia—Indonesia, India and China.

Mennonites now come from 57 nations, speak 100 languages and dialects, and are shaped by 100 cultural traditions. We hear the words of Peter: "You are now the people of God, who once were not his people" (1 Peter 2:10a *NEB*). In this assembly is the evidence of God's grace. Here is the story of scattered sons and daughters whom God has chosen to be his people. And yet as we celebrate our particular peoplehood, we know that God's love extends beyond us to his wider family as John records: ". . . there are other sheep of mine, not belonging to this fold, whom I must bring in, and they too will listen to my voice. There will then be one flock, one shepherd" (John 10:16).

In 1524 we were not a people—neither Mennonite nor Anabaptist, neither Doopsgezinde nor Täufer. We were then Catholic and Confucist, Hindu and Shintoist, animist and Buddhist, Muslim and Ethiopian Orthodox, and varieties of religious indifference. In the mysterious unfolding of God's providence we who flow from 1,000 tributaries have been joined into a stream of 730,000 members, like the mighty River Rhine which flows past Strasbourg.

Definitions to explain this peoplehood elude us, as do efforts to define a mother's love or a martyr's tenacity of conviction. And yet deep in our being we know that we are a family which has been bonded together by an awareness of what is sacred, the work to be done, how we are related, the stories to be told, a common memory, a common authority, a confronted common danger and an expected common future.

Although the early Anabaptists were impatient with elaborate theological distinctions, they did seek to press into words those things which they believed as a covenanted and disciplined community. Up the Rhine River in the village of Schleitheim in February 1527 a small band of Anabaptists under the leadership of Michael Sattler met to outline in seven articles what they believed. They spoke of walking in simplicity, living in hope, seeking unity and being at peace. They affirmed their convictions concerning believer's baptism, congregational discipline, the Lord's Supper, separation from the world, the pastor as shepherd, peacemaking and truth telling. The spirit of Schleitheim lives today in every MWC assembly. Listen to the words which pervade that early confession: "Christ teaches . . . Christ commands . . . Christ says . . . as Christ is minded . . . Christ present with us . . . through Christ . . . in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ . . . within the perfection of Christ . . . walking with him . . . doing as he did . . . in his steps . . . taking up his cross. . . ." Here is Christology with the lyrical voice of the psalmist.

Perhaps a key to an understanding of peoplehood lies in gesture, song and poetry. Ever since the hymns of the Anabaptists in Passau prison were gathered together in the *Ausbund*, we have been a singing people. Ever since Tieleman van Braght recorded the stories of "blood witnesses" in the *Martyrs Mirror*, we have been a storytelling people. One remembers a saying of the Navajo Indians: "Those who would be our people

must learn to sing our songs and weave our rugs." At Wichita we observed how we could transcend awkward efforts to communicate through the soaring flight of song. In our singing of hymns we find our peoplehood. As children of the Exodus, our God has "carried us on eagle's wings." To us he says, "If only you will now listen to me and keep my covenant, then out of all peoples you shall become my special possession. . ." (Exodus 18:5).

What brings us together as a people? If one is of "the house and lineage" of Schleitheim one finds one's worth and purpose in Christ who dwells in the midst of his people. As we now seek to describe this particular Mennonite people, we look for evidences where Christ is incarnate in the common life of his own.

Who are we as a Mennonite people? As one moves among our people one observes that the Mennonite view of the church is woven of the warp and woof of relationships, a communal fabric: "the people of God" (1 Peter 2:9), "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27), "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Brothers and sisters meet Christ and from this triggers a chain reaction of the Spirit: Stephen meets Zedekia and Zedekia meets Gladys and Gladys meets Aristarchus and Aristarchus meets Hiroshi and Hiroshi meets Louise and Louise meets Sushil and Sushil meets Hector. The mark of a true fellowship in Christ is that as a family member one can immediately discuss the deep issues of life without first testing the waters with small talk.

Who are we as a Mennonite people? Although we speak in 100 tongues, we share a common biblical language. As one reaches out for analogy, metaphor or parable to communicate across the borders of culture, one draws from the deep well of Scripture. A mark of this fellowship has been that it moves and lives and has its being in the language and the mind of Scripture.

Who are we as a Mennonite people? We come to Strasbourg from more than 1,000 congregations. Our congregations are our spiritual homes. To understand Mennonites as a people one is called to visit them in the infinite variety of their congregational settings. One can see those congregations now: a congregation that meets under a thatched roof on the edge of the Serengeti, students and teachers worshiping in an upper room near the university in Sapporo, Japan, Indian families praying under a metal roof in a lush upland valley of Guatemala, an urban congregation meeting in a centuries-old meeting place with a great organ on the Singel in Amsterdam, plain people singing hymns without musical instruments in a white frame meetinghouse in the farm country of Lancaster County, Pa., a house church in Hiroshima where the first nuclear bomb destroyed the city, the string of congregations in clearings in the rain forest around the base of Muria Mountain on the Island of Java, small groups meeting in homes in countries where authorities view the church with fear and hostility, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, a joyful throng of worshipers singing, clapping, hugging, with the worshipers enveloped by the throbbing beat of electronically amplified instruments, in Hong Kong walking through a narrow pathway of a hundred tiny shops which opens into a courtyard filled with the singing of a young congregation. . . . Our peoplehood is a garden in which God has planted, cultivated and watered his congregations with their endless variety and beauty. One shall know us by these local fellowships in Christ.

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# Who are we?

Who are we as a Mennonite people? We are a people with a long memory. The faith is passed from generation to generation by "bringing all things to remembrance" (John 14:26). Mennonites are a people who tell stories. Once there lived in Strasbourg a good man, Michael Sattler, who gave winsome testimony to his faith, who crossed the river into the Black Forest to nurture new faith communities. There he was seized and taken to the town of Rottenberg, where he was burned at the stake and his wife drowned eight days later. He died praying for his persecutors. At that time living in this city of refuge, Strasbourg, was a woman, Catherine Zell, whose heart went out to homeless Anabaptist refugees. She was the wife of one of the reformers, but her kitchen door was always open to the Anabaptists. When there was a knock on the door, one could hear her say, "Come in. Come in. Make yourself at home."

One can see boatloads of Swiss Mennonites slipping down the river past Strasbourg under cover of night, fleeing their lovely mountain valleys where they suffered the lash of harsh rule. The refugees had their eyes on new homes in Penn's Woods beyond the sea. Aiding them with counsel and funds on their hazardous flight were generous Dutch Mennonites.

One delights in those students in Kobe meeting in a garage for Bible study and covenanting to become that first Mennonite church in Japan. One sees that boat laden with wheat arriving in Calcutta for the famine sufferers in India in 1898 soon followed by the planting of Mennonite churches in India. And were we not there with those 18,000 Mennonite refugees camped on the outskirts of Moscow in 1929, positioned there to make their last desperate plea to emigrate? We are a storytelling people—old stories and new stories.

In our new-found peoplehood our storehouse of memories has increased a hundredfold. Your stories have become our stories; our memories have become your memories. We can now say that we all were on the little sailing ship *Concord* which brought those first Mennonites to Germantown in 1683. We all were chained in the hold of that slave ship named *Jesus* which carried a cargo of slaves from Africa to America. We all were in the Chortitza Colony when White, Red and bandit soldiers ravaged the community. We all are with that congregation in Managua, Nicaragua, as they pray that armies will not invade their land.

Who are we as Mennonite people? Early in the 16th century, when Strasbourg was a staging area for a broad missionary movement, we were known as a witnessing people. Anabaptist missionaries went forth two by two to tell the Good News, spreading northward down the Rhine, eastward down the Danube. However, persecution contained the missionary fervor. Generations of quietude followed. But now in recent years has come a rekindling of the spirit of the Great Commission. Into our vocabulary have entered the names of new faith communities—music to our ears: Addis Ababa and Bukiroba, Mutopo Hills and Oraibi, Tshikapa and Kafumba, Hyderabad and Bihar, Kai Chow and Pati, Semarang and Osaka, Cachipay and Managua, Aibonito and Montevideo, Palermo and Dublin. Yoked with this missionary imperative has been an outpouring of relief, service, development and peacemaking in response to that haunting, compelling question from Jesus' portrayal of the Last Judgment: "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you drink, a stranger and took you home, or naked and clothed you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and come to visit you" (Matthew 25:37-38). Service "in the name of Christ" is a mark of this people.

In travels among our people in different lands I often ask the question What is a Mennonite? What is a Mennonite kind of Christian? The answers rarely reflect the wording of the historic declarations of faith. They are fresh and spontaneous. A Chulupi Indian sitting by a waterhole in the Chaco bush observed, "Others teach one to be a Christian one day a week. Mennonites teach one to be a Christian seven days a week." A pastor who has lived through the painful years of civil war in his land explained that "we are drawn together because of the new birth, living out every day as the day of the new birth." He added, "Non-resistance is enormously important to us. It permits us to go anywhere in the world and in any situation to feel free." Someone working among the independent churches in Africa commented on what "Mennonite" means to his Botswana people: "It is Ed and Irene, John and Ron." The image of Mennonite is incarnate in people. Another who has lived long in Indonesia observed, "First, Mennonites view the church seriously; second, they take the New Testament seriously; third, they have a strong desire to hold together." In another country where the church is under trial, a brother answers simply and directly, "Mennonites stick to it. They can work in any situation. They take care how they teach their children. They are moderate—not given to doctrinal or liturgical extremes. They emphasize a practical living out of the faith—pure living, Bible reading, tithing. . . ." Another living through a time of national testing said, "In this crisis we came under spiritual control. We talked together. We prayed together. We agreed we would do it the Lord's way. The Spirit is handling this. We are shaped by Bible teaching."

The beauty and the joy of our peoplehood is that Christians from young congregations can now be our teachers, pastors and parents in the pilgrim walk. In this assembly are brothers and sisters who, in their particular ways, open for us new windows and doors to kingdom living. We see the world of need afresh through one another's eyes. Our brothers and sisters from other lands can liberate us from parochial and national idolatries.

As a family coming together after a long separation, meeting relatives whom we may never have seen before, we use MWC gatherings to make new friends. We can transcend the small talk about air schedules and lost baggage to speak of things that matter: your pilgrimage . . . our home congregation . . . the people who shaped your life . . . our family and their interests . . . that which brings you to Strasbourg . . . my concerns for peace between our two nations . . . the hope that sustains you in a troubled world. Of such conversations is woven the fabric of our peoplehood.

The significance of Strasbourg will be in great assemblies with the speeches, films, drama, singing and prayers. As significant will be those talks with new brothers and sisters we meet in the corridors, on the steps, around the dinging tables, under the trees and on the streets of Strasbourg. At this gathering we are like the disciples on the Emmaus Road. We can walk and talk with each other about the deep issues of mind and soul, pilgrimage and hope. As we do this we can be assured that a stranger will draw close to us and will enter into the conversation. And as we invite the stranger to sit at table with us, he will make himself known to us in the breaking of the bread. And then we shall say to one another, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures" (Luke 24:32). •

# A disciple's prayer

*George E. Janzen*

Our Father in heaven,
immaculate in holiness,
incomparable in wisdom,
unexcelled in majesty,
unparalleled in resplendent glory,
unrivaled in power,
unerring in judgment,
unmatched in mercy,
infinite in forgiveness,
unbounded in grace,
unlimited in love,
indescribable in human language.

Hallowed be thy name.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.
Holy! Holy! Holy! Lord God of Hosts!
Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But unto thy Name give glory.
Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be unto thee, Lord God of the universe,
And unto the Lamb forever and ever.

I magnify thy wondrous Name,
I adore thy awesome majesty,
I glory in thy bountiful grace,
I exult in the perfection of thy righteousness,
I worship thee in the beauty of thy holiness,
I address thee with anthems of unrestrained joy and praise.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Thy kingdom come to my heart, O Lord.
Let it be a citadel of righteousness,
Let it be a temple of the Holy Ghost,
Let it be the throne of the Prince of Peace.
Thy kingdom come to our church, O Lord.
Let it be a fellowship of redeemed men and women who love one another.
Let it be a house of worship and prayer and praise,
Let it be a lighthouse of hope for those who are lost in the night.
Thy kingdom come to our land, O Lord.
Let it be a nation whose God is the Lord,
Let it be a nation anchored in thy Word,
Let it be a nation exalted by thy righteousness.
Thy kingdom come to our world, O Lord.
Let all the ends of the earth know that thou art God, and that there is none beside thee,
Let all people come from the east and the west and from the north and the south to bring homage unto thee,
Let the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Give us this day our daily bread.
Give us bread for the body,
And because people do not live by bread alone,
Give us also nourishment for the soul;
And because it is so easy for us to take these things for granted,
Give us also gratitude for the gifts of your grace;
And because many dwell in lands without rain and without crops,
Sitting in the dust, no tears left to weep while their children starve,
Give us also willingness of heart to share with them your overflowing abundance.

And forgive us our trespasses.
Remember not our transgressions, O Lord,
Our sins of commission and our sins of omission,
Our sins of pride and lust and greed,
Our sins of thought and word and deed.

O Lord, all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,
Our hearts are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;
We are a people of unclean lips,
And we dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.
Do not treat us as our sins deserve,
Do not repay us according to our iniquities,
But as a merciful father has compassion on his children,
So, O Lord, do thou have mercy upon us.

As we forgive those who trespass against us.
O Lord, we are ashamed,
Our consciences condemn us,
Forgive us, Lord, for not forgiving those who trespass against us.
Forgive us, Lord, for not forgiving others as you forgive us.
Forgive us, Lord, for limiting our forgiveness to seven times, or less,
When you consistently forgive us to 70 times seven times.

And lead us not into temptation.
Sometimes our spirits are willing,
But always our flesh is weak;
And sometimes our spirits are not willing at all.
Sometimes we even tempt temptation to tempt us because we love our sin.
Help us to despise our sins and to loathe our unrighteousness,
Help us to be ashamed of our transgressions and to repent of our iniquities.
Help us both to will and to do your good pleasure,
Deliberately choosing that which is well-pleasing in thy sight.
Allow us not to be tempted beyond what we can bear.

But deliver us from evil.
You came to destroy the works of darkness.
Now destroy them!
Assault every fortified tower of iniquity,
Besiege every bastion of unrighteousness,
Raze every rampart of rebellion to the ground,
Cast down every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God,
And bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever.

We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty.
Who was and who is and who is to come,
Because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms
Of our Lord and of his Christ,
And he shall reign forever and ever.

Hallelujah! Amen.

*George E. Janzen, 32693 Crane Ave., Mission, BC V2V 4V3, longtime missionary to Japan, currently serves as pastor of the Cedar Hills Mennonite Church.*

# I got life and I got love

*Helga Schmidt*

The small, weathered, ashen-gray tombstone seemed displaced amidst its surroundings. Its slight tilt and entanglement of dry weeds indicated obvious neglect. It stood desolate among the rest. No colorful flowers bloomed at its base. Its drab, forlorn appearance indicated a lack of love and care.

I had traveled over 6,000 miles from Kansas to my birthplace in Germany to visit this grave. Over three decades of mixed emotions seemed to crash together in my mind—feelings of hate, anger, pain and rejection. The woman buried here was a stranger. She was my mother.

The day was cold and dismal. A light rain was falling. To commemorate Mother's Day, people clutched tiny bundles of brightly colored flowers and laid them beside tombstones. Even the colorful small flower stands surrounding the graveyard failed to deduct from the dreariness.

*To me the person under that tombstone was "unknown." Yet she was my mother.*

The woman who lay buried in front of me was faceless. I had trouble forming a mental image of this person I had never seen. I also found it difficult to feel the sad love feelings one should have for a mother who is dead. My heart told me I should feel sorrow and sadness mingled with love. After all, this was my mother, but my mind told me that this was just another person named mother. She gave birth to me and then promptly gave me up. This was the closest I had been to my mother since my birth 35 years earlier. Not only had I been given up, but four of my sisters and a brother had been as well. Our mother had decided to keep her fifth daughter and raise her. There were seven of us . . . all born out of wedlock.

How could I gain perspective of the situation? Everything that I had been brought up to believe was wrong and sinful had obviously been done by this woman. I too was a mother. I had three daughters and I could not imagine giving any of them up. I could not understand abandoning the life I had carried under my heart for nine months. From the first flutterings of life I loved my children.

As I glanced at my newly found sister, I saw tears in her eyes as she reached out her hand to clasp mine. Suddenly I was aware of the salty taste of my own tears as they fell for all our mother had missed by not raising her family. They fell for the missed childhood we could not share, the childish laughter and secrets that went unwhispered. I cried for the separation my sister and I felt now, even though we were together for the first time in our lives.

As we embraced each other, we gazed at the dismal, barren grave. We both felt this stranger had let us down yet had given us the greatest gift of all—she gave us life. She also made life much brighter for six childless couples by giving each of them a child.

How ironic that Mother's Day was only two days away. How ironic too that although our birth mother was dead, both of us had mothers who were waiting to celebrate Mother's Day with us. Our adoptive mothers were the ones who had wiped our tears and often calmed our childish fears. They hovered over us when we were sick. They worried when we were late. They gave us encouragement when we felt discouraged. They laughed and cried with us. They believed in us. Their love was unconditional. Theirs was the true love of a mother. As we walked away from the cemetery, I stopped and took one last look.

Suddenly I realized I was luckier than a lot of people: I had that special love that only someone who loves and wants children—yet has been childless—can give. I had two mothers, one who gave me life and one who made my life worth living.

*Helga Schmidt, Route 1, Box 28A, Newton, KS 67114, is a nurse and, with her family, attends Tabor Mennonite Church. She writes that this first visit to her home since adoption was "a wonderful but difficult time."*

## Let me out

*Rochelle Schantz*

Let me out,
I'm single,
I enjoy your company,
But don't want to intrude.

Let me out,
I'm single,
I'm capable,
Don't deny me respect.

Let me out,
I'm single,
I'm fun,
Don't deny me good times.

Let me out,
I'm single,
I respect your difference,
Don't deny me strength.

Let me out,
I'm single,
I'm vulnerable,
Don't deny me weakness.

Let me out of the closet—
I belong to the family of God.

# Thanks for a million

*Bernie Wiebe*

Few people in the General Conference membership past the age of 30 have never met or heard from Harry E. Martens. Often it was a contact for a donation to Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Or it was a seminar on estate planning, sponsored by Mennonite Foundation. Many heard Harry at conferences, challenging us to be good financial stewards, but inevitably he also challenged us to be good disciples. Harry and Olga modeled for us a beautiful balance of voluntary service and working for a regular salary.

In a recent conversation with Harry I asked him what was "high" on his heart at the time. Without hesitation he said, "I'd like to express special thanks to all the fine folks who have given generously to the many financial campaigns I have led. I feel a deep gratitude especially for the way people came through on my last fund drive for the seminary."

It's hard to imagine the General Conference without Harry popping up here and there to remind us there is still a ways to go on this or that drive for x number of dollars. But he is now 75, and he did formally retire from the Mennonite Foundation in 1976.

So what was Harry's "last" drive? In July 1980 Harry Martens agreed to raise a $1 million endowment fund for Mennonite Biblical Seminary. It was to be for five causes: (1) the Erland Waltner Chair in Biblical Literature, (2) the Overseas Mission Training Center, (3) the MBS student aid fund, (4) the AMBS scholarship fund, (5) the conservation of campus and buildings fund.

At the 1984 annual seminary board meeting, Harry Martens was able to report his latest mission accomplished. As of May 31 *over* $1 million had been received and/or committed ($959,000 on hand, $90,000 in a land contract and $30,000 in a bequest) to this endowment fund.

In addition to recruiting the help of MBS "associates" all over the conference to help in this project, Harry himself once again did these four years of work largely as a volunteer. Being past retirement age, he accepted only the amount of remuneration that would not jeopardize his social security income. (Harry didn't really want to discuss that part with me, but his boss, Henry Poettcker, confirmed the above.)

*It takes many willing hands and hearts to freely give back to the Lord a goodly portion of what he has entrusted to us in order to support the total mission of God's people.*

*Harry Martens has many times been the first to offer his hands. Again and again he has found others ready to offer their hands in response.*

*This time Harry says "thank you" to those many willing hands.*

**We have many beautiful people.** What Harry Martens did and does want to do at this time is to thank all those who contributed to this million-dollar endowment fund. "A million thanks, at the least, we all owe to these people," said Harry, "and I wish I could go to each one personally to let them know how beautifully they have given."

Harry wanted to express special gratitude to those who gave gifts and bequests of $25,000 and over to the fund. The Amelia Beck estate, Carlock, Ill.; Robert and Minnie Franz, Linden, Wash.; Leonard and Linda Harms, Clinton, Okla.; the Florence Kinsinger estate, Normal, Ill.; the Florence Miller estate, Normal, Ill.; the Luella Miller estate, Carlock, Ill.; Clarence and Martha Peters, Henderson, Neb.; Peter and Marie Wall, Burley, Idaho; and Walter Waltner, Ritzville, Wash. "There were many others who gave and God blesses them all," said Harry, "but it seems we should say a special thanks for these large gifts."

While his health permits, Harry Martens continues to serve Mennonite Biblical Seminary on a consultative basis. To me Harry said, "But I don't believe there will be any more campaigns in my portfolio. The Lord has blessed Olga and myself many times beyond what we had dreamed. Now we feel it is someone else's turn."

**Our thanks to you also.** Yes, we agree that there are appropriate times to give special thanks to God by expressing gratitude to people. Thanks to all who gave to the MBS endowment fund. Thanks to all who faithfully give for all the GC ministries.

And a special thanks to you, Harry. You remain an inspiration to all of us. God bless you and your family.

**A contingency plan** that promises direct and immediate resistance to any U.S. invasion or direct military action against Nicaragua was announced in the August issue of *Sojourners* by editor Jim Wallis. The plan calls for a nonviolent occupation of congressional field offices and massive civil disobedience at the White House. Wallis said that "thousands of U.S. citizens have been to Nicaragua and can testify that President Reagan and his administration's allegations are demonstrably false."

**Leaders of regional and national** councils of churches shared concerns about evangelicals, anti-ecumenical movements and grass-roots movements during most of a 90-minute meeting Aug. 2 in Geneva, Switzerland. The ecumenical leaders agreed that their concerns are with churches and fringe groups whose appeal is individualistic and simplistic and which shun or reject ecumenism. Group discussion made clear the relationships and potential effects of these churches vary widely. One Scandinavian leader asked, "What's wrong with our churches? Are these small churches offering something that we should be? They are growing."

# NEWS

CHM, COE, COM, DA meet

## GC commissions hold midyear meetings

Newton, Kan.—The three commissions and the Division of Administration of the General Conference held their midyear meetings in September and early October. They discussed directions, made some decisions and proposed tentative steps to be approved by later commission or General Board meetings.

### Commission on Home Ministries

The CHM executive committee met Sept. 11-12 in Newton. This followed or preceded meetings by the Mennonite Voluntary Service reference council, CHM staff and the evangelism and church planting reference council.

The executive committee agreed to continue supporting evangelism and church planting staff person Don Yoder half time (the other half provided by the Mennonite Church and the Pacific District Conference), to reduce the poverty fund in 1984 from $50,000 to $10,000 and to keep the Inter-Mennonite Media Group a loose association rather than create a new staff position in that area.

The MVS reference council met Sept. 8-9 and postponed a decision to open a voluntary service unit in Tucson, Ariz., to help refugees. Members also explored the idea of recruiting church planters on a VS basis.

The evangelism and church planting reference council, meeting Sept. 11-13, decided to use Choice IX radio spots for peace church evangelism, worked on a church planting manual, made plans for a 50-day emphasis on church planting after Easter 1985, developed guidelines for churches on how to relate to two denominations and discussed the continuing need to recruit support people without having funds.

### Commission on Education

COE members, meeting Sept. 13-15 in Kansas City, Kan., increased Paula Diller Lehman's half-time assignment as secretary for youth education to full time, effective in 1985, as she looks toward coordinating all youth activities for the 1986 triennial sessions of General Conference (to be held in Saskatoon). They also reviewed a newly created workcamp task force.

Because of this increase and due to a limited budget, the hiring of a staff person in adult education had to be postponed. In other business, COE worked through a statement of financial performance for its bookstores, recommended that the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* project be rewritten in a multivolume set and noted that Helmut Harder's *Guide to Faith* has been translated into Chinese. Time was also spent discussing staff relationships and personnel concerns.

### Commission on Overseas Mission

COM members, meeting in Winnipeg Sept. 22-25, voted to create a new staff position of COM Canadian coordinator, to be located in Winnipeg, to give closer attention to Canadian concerns.

Executive secretary Erwin Rempel reported on his recent trip to Africa.

The commission accepted the resignation of Peter Kehler, secretary for Asia, who plans to return to Canada next year.

Edward and Ramoth Burkhalter, missionaries in India for 37 years, reported that efforts at reconciliation among church leaders there continue, and they asked for continued prayer for the church in India.

*COM members (from left): Peter Sawatzky, Jesse Gaeddert, James Juhnke, Harold Rittenhouse, John R. Friesen*

A statement outlining an understanding about the sensitive use of the denominational press in crisis situations was accepted. The statement seeks to honor requests from overseas church leaders about crises in their countries while keeping churches informed as fully as possible. Concerning news editors and journalists in North America, the statement reads in part, "We encourage research and investigation into crisis situations. We recommend that decisions to print or not to print news about crisis situations be made by a team which includes print media personnel."

The commission also reviewed joint work with Mennonite Board of Missions in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, and evaluated the China Educational Exchange.

### Division of Administration

DA members met Oct. 5-6 in Chicago. They discussed the compensation struc-

**Most Canadians favor a multilateral freeze** on the production, testing and deployment of all new nuclear weapons and their delivery systems, provided the freeze can be verified by satellites to prevent cheating, according to a Gallup Poll taken in late June. The survey found that 85 percent of Canadians approve a multilateral freeze which would apply to the nuclear powers—Britain, France, China, the United States and the Soviet Union. The survey found that approval of a nuclear freeze is consistently high in all parts of the country, among all age groups and among supporters of all three major political parties.

**A ninth series** of *Choice* radio spots has been recorded by Mennonite Board of Missions in Harrisonburg, Va. Written and narrated by David Augsburger, professor of pastoral care at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. *Choice IX* poses situations requiring an ethical choice and suggesting possible Christian responses. In the 65 spots, Augsburger examines the destructive ways of fighting in relationships (marriage, parent-child, work) and gives suggestions for fighting more fairly. The General Conference is one of the sponsors of the radio spots.

**"The most stupid argument against gun control** is that 'it will disarm the citizenry, while criminals will continue to get guns,' " says columnist Sydney Harris, adding, "Of course they will, but the great majority of homicides are committed by people with no previous criminal record (Murder is not the criminal's characteristic crime)."

ture for employees of General Conference and recommended that the budget for 1985 be 8 percent over receipts for this year. All recommendations must be acted on by the General Board at its meetings Oct. 25-26. Conference treasurer Ted Stuckey projected that only 97 percent of this year's budget will be met. He also noted that receipts from Canada are up 11 percent over last year's giving while U.S. giving is down from last year.

The General Conference's development plan committee met with DA for part of the time. The committee met with two consulting firms and will recommend one to General Board. Development director Carol Suter has met with leadership from each U.S. district and Canadian province to discuss the plan.

Edgar Rempel of Winnipeg was named to replace Suter on DA. Suter had served as chairperson. *Gordon Houser, Muriel Thiessen Stackley and Alice Ruth Ramseyer*

## Nurse needed

Committed Christian RN with **midwifery and administrative skills** required for the medical center located in the Blue Creek Mennonite Colony in Belize. Must be able to speak English, Spanish and German. Duties to commence **February 1985**.

For further information contact:
EMMC Mission Office
Box 2128
Winkler, MB R0A 2X0
(204) 325-7006.

## Stackley appointed news editor of GC news service

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Muriel Thiessen Stackley, formerly of Lincoln, Neb., has been named news editor of the General Conference's news service, effective Oct. 1. The appointment was made by the conference's General Board upon recommendation from its communications committee.

Well known throughout the General Conference for her frequent contributions to church periodicals such as *Rejoice*, *Youth Bible Study Guide* and *Builder*, Stackley has also authored a unit for the youth Foundation Series Sunday school curriculum.

She has a long association with the work of the General Conference, having served as assistant editor of the Foundation Series and assistant general editor for the conference from 1973-79, editor of *Window to Mission* from 1973-74, editorial assistant for *The Mennonite* from 1959-62 and editor of *The Mennonite's* youth section from 1958-62. From 1979-82 she edited the Committee on Women's Concerns *Report* for Mennonite Central Committee.

Stackley has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton (Ohio) College and a master's degree from the University of Kansas (Lawrence). She has also studied at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, Calif., and the University of Nebraska (Lincoln).

She is married to Theodore Stackley, an environmental health engineer with Sedgwick County (Kansas). They have three children: Therron, 19, Javan, 18, and Tamm, 14.

## New administrative position

### COM Canadian coordinator

Commission on Overseas Mission
General Conference Mennonite Church

Position available: **Summer 1985**

Person needs administrative, relational and communications skills, willingness to travel and a commitment to the world mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Responsible for administrative concerns related to COM Canadian missionaries, coordination of overseas mission interpretation and promotion among Canadian churches.

Apply to:
Erwin Rempel, executive secretary
Commission on Overseas Mission
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
Telephone (316) 283-5100.

## Kehler resigns COM post

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Peter Kehler, who has served as secretary for Asia of the General Conference Commission on Overseas Mission since 1978, submitted his resignation at that body's midyear meeting, effective March 1985.

Prior to his current position, Kehler worked for COM as a missionary in Taiwan for 16 years. He says that he will miss the interaction with overseas church leaders and missionaries.

Kehler is married to Sue Martens Kehler. They plan to return to Canada in the coming year.

**The Mennonite Central Committee canner** was busy again in August, but this time it was corn, not meat, that was being canned. The corn, about 1,000 dozen ears in all, was donated by David Brubaker of Brickerville, Pa., to MCC. On Aug. 16 more than 75 volunteers gathered at Brubaker's farm and at MCC's Akron, Pa., headquarters to pick and can the corn. The corn will either be sent overseas or distributed through the South Central Pennsylvania Food Bank to needy people in this area.

*Evangelist Billy Graham visits a Moscow synagogue during his 12-day visit to the Soviet Union on Sept. 15.*

**Manipur State in northeast India** has been plagued with drought, rats and political turmoil, which have caused widespread famine. Mennonite Central Committee has sent 360 metric tons of wheat to this area, to be distributed to the hungry people of Manipur in cooperation with CASA (Church's Auxiliary for Social Action), the India Protestant churches' social service agency. Mennonites in the Central States region donated the wheat through MCC's Harvest Against Hunger drive on Sept. 1. The food is to be used in food-for-work projects, in which people are paid in grain for work on such projects as clearing lands and building canals.

## Church relief workers killed, kidnapped in Nicaragua

Akron, Pa. (MCC)— Counterrevolutionary guerrillas from Honduras, backed by U.S. money and arms, have attacked trucks carrying food and humanitarian supplies to victims in the war zone in northern Nicaragua, a spokesman from CEPAD, the evangelical church's relief and development organization in Nicaragua reports. Four workers have been kidnapped and five people have died in recent attacks.

According to a Sept. 18 telex from CEPAD, four relief workers disappeared while transporting supplies for the CEPAD programs in the Zelaya Norte region in July. After an investigation, CEPAD reported that the men were kidnapped and taken into Honduras. Morgan Almanza, director of the CEPAD agriculture projects in the region, was one of the four. CEPAD reports that his wife recently gave birth to a baby girl and prays that Morgan and the others will return safely.

A bombing attack on the Santa Clara military training base in early September resulted in the death of a farmer and two young girls. Two Americans fighting with the counterrevolutionaries were also killed when the helicopter they were riding in crashed.

One of the girls, Alba Luz, was visiting the base to sell bread and was hit by a rocket. She was a member of the Assembly of God Church near Santa Clara. At her funeral her mother pleaded with Witness for Peace workers, "Please intercede for us before your government. Help the North American Christians understand our suffering."

On the same day as the bombing attack on Santa Clara, a CEPAD truck was hit with machine gun fire in the town of Sumubila, also in the Zelaya region. Two people in the truck were killed, Adolfo Bushey, a member of the Moravian Church, and a 6-month-old baby girl. Four more were injured by the guerrilla gunfire.

This year nearly 2,000 Nicaraguan civilians have been killed in counterrevolutionary activity. The war has crippled Nicaragua's economy and development. The CEPAD report explains, "Resources are instead used to defend our people and land from kidnappings, destruction and death coming from U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries."

In response to the CEPAD telex, Edgar Stoesz, Mennonite Central Committee associate executive secretary, at the instruction of the MCC executive committee which met in September, sent a message to Langhorne Motley, assistant secretary of inter-American affairs of the U.S. State Department.

The MCC message reads, "CEPAD asks us to intervene with the U.S. government to cease support of counterrevolutionary activity. Accordingly we repeat our previous appeals that the United States cease fueling the conflict with weapons and work instead toward a negotiated settlement."

In reporting on the situation, Stoesz requested the executive committee to pray for workers with CEPAD.

In 1984 the U.S. government provided $24 million in military assistance to counterrevolutionaries who operate from both Honduran and Costa Rican bases. The counterrevolutionary guerrillas are attempting to overthrow the Sandinista government.

The *New York Times* reports that in addition to official U.S. government aid, U.S. private organizations have provided approximately $10 million in aid to the counterrevolutionaries with U.S. government approval and help. *Joy Hofer*


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For more information or to start your IRA, call toll-free 800-348-7468; or (219) 533-9511, collect in Indiana.

Mennonite Mutual Aid

**Should Mennonite farmers** across North America organize themselves into a network for sharing mutual concerns of faith and practice? That question will get prime attention at a Conference on Faith and Farming, Nov. 26-28 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pa. John Sikma, past president of a Dutch Reformed Christian Farmers Federation in Ontario, will tell why that federation was formed. A second major address, "Faith, Farming and Economics," will be given by Don Reeves from Central City, Neb. Write to Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666, or call (412) 423-2056.

*The apostle Paul (British actor Philip Sayer) is led through the streets of Rome in chains in a scene from* A.D., *a 12-hour miniseries to be seen on NBC-TV Feb. 10-14, 1985.*

**A.D.** (Anno Domini—the year of our Lord), the 12-hour miniseries to be aired on NBC-TV starting Feb. 10, 1985, covers 35 years of the first century. Several years in the making, the miniseries dramatizes the birth and growth of the Christian church. It serves as a sequel to the 10-hour television drama *Jesus of Nazareth*, continuing the story to 68 A.D. It is to air Feb. 10-14, 1985.

# MCC committees discuss funding, women's concerns

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—Funding, women's concerns, staffing and space were the topics discussed at a special joint session of the Mennonite Central Committee and MCC U.S. executive committees.

The two committees met here Sept. 21. Both groups also met separately for their regular fall sessions Sept. 20 and 22.

The joint sessions opened with a recommendation from the funding committee that MCC continue to allocate 25 percent of its U.S. contributions to MCC U.S. for the next two years. "We do not want these numbers to be written in granite," explained Bruce Harder of Portland, Ore., member of the funding committee. "But we want to create a two-year moratorium, a time in which we can discuss priorities."

"Discussing priorities is difficult, because we've always said we can do both international and domestic programs," added funding committee member Phil Rich of Archbold, Ohio.

Portions of the 25 percent budgeted for MCC U.S. relate directly to international programs. This year approximately one-third of the MCC U.S. budget goes to constituency relations and activity related to international programs. The remainder is spent on domestic programs, Rich reported.

The funding committee, made up of Harder, Rich and Norman Shenk of Salunga, Pa., was established in December 1983 to recommend funding guidelines for MCC, MCC U.S. and the U.S. regions.

The three recommended that the executive committees discuss these concerns during the next two years: How much of MCC's money should be spent domestically? Should the trend toward more domestic program continue? How much of MCC U.S. budget should relate directly to international programs? Who should control fund raising for MCC? What do the words "mutuality" and "coordination" mean in the budget process?

The funding committee also recommended that MCC fund raising be centralized and that MCC develop and coordinate new initiatives in fund raising, both from within the constituency and without.

The joint committee approved the above recommendations.

In support of a report from an ad hoc committee on women's concerns, the executive committees approved the creation of a personnel policies committee to periodically review recruiting procedures and staff benefits, with a special interest in strengthening the role of women, minorities and handicapped people in the work of MCC.

The joint committee also formally recognized the already existing staff position for women's concerns. The person in this position will now serve as a liaison between overseas and domestic programs, personnel services and the Committee on Women's Concerns. The joint committee also recommended the CWC remain a subcommittee of U.S. Peace Section and MCC Canada's Peace and Social Concerns Committee.

In other business, MCC executive secretary Reg Toews asked for guidance regarding the creation of staff positions. "Given the growth of MCC, MCC U.S. and SELFHELP, we need to coordinate more closely the creation of additional staff positions," noted Toews.

"All of the positions being requested presently look good individually. But when we add up all the positions, the bottom line raises questions," he continued. "Has this growth been in line with our priorities?"

MCC chairman Elmer Neufeld noted that normally the "leanest organizations do best," and member Paul Quiring said he would feel "uncomfortable aggrandizing" Akron offices.

"We need to ask how much more sausage is coming out of the grinder," said MCC Canada executive secretary J. M. Klassen.

Others noted that it is cost effective to centralize the services provided and that MCC programs and budgets have grown in proportion to the number of staff.

Toews also reported on the need for additional office space. MCC chairman Neufeld asked Norman Shenk, Siegfried Bartel and Bruce Harder to examine the long-term space needs of MCC and MCC U.S. and bring a report to the executive committees in September 1985.

### MCC meeting

The MCC executive committee also met after the joint meeting with MCC U.S. Board members heard reports from each continent and from support departments.

Paul Myers, disaster response coordinator, said food shipments overseas during 1984 exceed the record total of 25,804 metric tons of food sent in 1983.

Shipments totaling 30,450 metric tons had already gone to nine countries this year, with another 17,405 metric tons of food aid in process.

Most of that is grain from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, with significant grains also expected this fall from U.S. donors during the special fall drive, Harvest Against Hunger.

Larger shipments are meeting emergency needs in countries such as Mozambique, Ethiopia and Nicaragua. The larger shipments also raise new issues, Myers observed, such as major shipping costs.

Questions of delivery were also raised. In the last few years MCC has moved away from MCC personnel directly de-

*continued on next page*

**How communicate the gospel** to secular indifferent people? How become a local movement? These are two of the topics to be addressed Jan. 28 - Feb. 1, 1985, at the annual pastors' workshop at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind. Nineteen resource people will address the theme "Evangelism in the Congregation" in sermons, lectures and workshops. Program and registration information is available from Mary Troyer, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.

**Former staff** at Mennonite Central Committee headquarters and Material Aid Center in Akron and Ephrata, Pa., from January 1967 to December 1976 are invited to a reunion in Akron July 26-28, 1985. Planning the reunion are Mary Zimmerman and Martha Becker, who report that the mailing list for staff during this period is incomplete. Contact Martha Becker, Route 1, Box 312, Stevens, PA 17578, (215) 267-6869, if you have up-to-date names and addresses of workers at headquarters during this time.

**Inmates at the Prince Albert,** Sask., penitentiary donated $900 to the Christian Outreach Program of Prince Albert in July. The money was presented to program directors Doug and Ruth Barwell, Mennonite Central Committee volunteers from Waterloo, Ont. Sponsored by the Grace Mennonite Church of Prince Albert, the program aids first-time young offenders from 8-12 years old by offering diversion from the court process, recreation, spiritual development, counseling and family support.

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livering most aid, to a process in which much delivery is done by local church groups or government services in which MCC has confidence. The move to still larger shipments increases MCC's reliance on delivery and reporting by other sources.

**MCC U.S. meeting**

The MCC U.S. executive committee also met after the joint meeting.

Executive secretary J. Wilmer Heisey brought to the committee a request from the Central States region to assist Mennonite farmers who are in financial difficulty, particularly those in Iowa.

After considerable discussion, the committee asked Heisey to explore with MCC personnel, farmers, business people and church leaders the ways in which MCC U.S. can respond. Heisey will bring a recommendation to the December meeting.

The executive committee also approved a proposal, brought by U.S. program director H. A. Penner, to establish workcamp experiences for high-school aged youth at several locations in the United States.

"These programs would enable young people to have hands-on experiences in Christian service and justice ministries," Penner said. "Youth should be challenged to consider full-time Christian service." The first such program will be located in Kentucky, where MCC already has workers.

The regional directors reported that they are busy collecting beans, corn, wheat and money for the Harvest Against Hunger appeal, a drive to raise resources for food shipments to 12 countries in 1984.

The board also heard reports from U.S. Peace Section, MDS, MMHS, SELFHELP, Material Aid and the Development Education Office. *Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker*

# Overground Railroad helps refugees

Akron, Pa. (MCC U.S.)—"Mario" had exhausted his legal appeals for asylum in the United States. He expected to be deported within a week back to El Salvador, where he almost certainly was on the death squads' hit list for having been a union leader.

Mario was being detained at El Corralon, "the big corral," the immigration prison at Los Fresnos in south Texas. One day, a voice on the public address system listed the names of those who were to be deported. Mario's was among them.

He thought his fight was lost. But when he presented himself at the gate, he found someone else waiting for him. Representatives of the Overground Railroad were there with bail money—with the chance for a new life for Mario.

The Overground Railroad is a service provided through Jubilee Partners, a Christian intentional community in Comer, Ga., Reba Place Church in Evanston, Ill., and Mennonite Central Committee to Central Americans seeking haven. The "railroad" runs from south Texas to other parts of the United States, with Canada as the final destination.

The channel began in 1983, with Jubilee Partners heading the effort. Since then, an estimated 250 Central American refugees have been transported through it to new homes and new lives in Canada. Some have been sponsored by the Canadian government, others by churches.

The Overground Railroad now needs help. Churches are needed to host refugees while they await the completion of their Canadian processing. Others are needed to provide transportation and to support the host churches. The Canadian government has added 400 people to its 1984 quota of government-sponsored refugees accepted from Latin America. One hundred of these people will be processed through the Canadian consulate in Atlanta. Jubilee Partners has been working closely with this consulate for the past two years.

The system works this way: Refugees from El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua make their way to the United States, many crossing the border in south Texas. There Overground Railroad workers Richard and Ruth Anne Friesen screen the refugees and help them apply for political asylum in the United States. This step is to insure that the Overground Railroad is following legal means in every way that is possible.

From there the Ano de Jubileo (Year of Jubilee) bus takes about 30 refugees to Jubilee's facility in Comer for a few weeks, until their interviews with the Canadian consulate in Atlanta are completed. The most recent trip was made in early September, with further trips scheduled every few weeks through the end of autumn. Host churches are needed from mid-September through the end of fall.

The refugees are then disbursed to various host locations where medical examinations are arranged and the refugees await final word on their immigration applications. The stay with the host congregation will likely last from six weeks up to three months. They are generally permitted to work during this time.

Mennonite Central Committee Canada has been arranging sponsorships and contacts for the refugees at the final destination in Canada.

For more information about how your congregation can assist Central American refugees through the Overground Railroad, contact Don Sensenig at Mennonite Central Committee, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, or Overground Railroad, 722 Monroe St., Evanston, IL 60202. *Cheryl Zehr Walker*

**"Time Lost:** A Demand for Action on Acid Rain" is the title of a report by an all-party committee of the Canadian Parliament. It points to the serious damage suffered by Canada's rivers, lakes, forests, fish, wildlife and crops. It notes that one-half of the acid rain that falls on Canada comes from the United States but that Canada has done little to curb its own pollutors. It calls for stricter controls on automobiles and on the big smelters and coal-burning power plants.

**There will be no winner** in the first year of competition for the Mennonite Video Arts Award. Award planners have chosen to withhold the $500 cash prize, based on response from students. The program was developed by the General Conference's Media Division to encourage development of video production skills among students of communication arts. For more information about the Mennonite Video Arts Award, write: Media Division, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370.

**The symbolism of birthing** was used several times during the commissioning service Aug. 26 of Marilyn Miller and several others who are forming the Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church. Miller had been co-pastor at Arvada (Colo.) Mennonite Church, one of the sponsoring congregations in the new venture. Also present were members of the Western District home missions committee, which had helped establish the Arvada Church 25 years before.

# RECORd

## WORKERS

*David Bragg* began a two-year MVS assignment in August as a teacher at Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi, Ariz. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder. His parents are John Bragg of Redondo Beach, Calif., and Jackie Bragg of Franingham, Mass.

*Denise Carpenter*, Holy Communion Church, St. Louis, is assistant property director in Peoples Housing in Chicago. This MVS assignment for one year began in August. She has a bachelor's degree from Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass. Her parents are Caleb and Ruth Carpenter of Norman, Okla.

*Patrick Conwell* and *Mary Lynn Naughton*, Immaculate Conception Chapel, Dayton, Ohio, began two-year MVS terms in August in St. Catharines, Ont. He is working with the Friendly Visitor Service and she is at The Women's Place. He has a bachelor's degree from St. Charles Seminary, Philadelphia, and a master's degree from the University of Dayton. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Dayton. His parents are James and Mary Conwell of Lansdale, Pa. Hers are James and Betty Naughton of Dayton.

*Gail Gustafson*, Bethany Baptist Church, Harwoods Heights, Ill., began a two-year MVS term in September as a caseworker for the Foundation for the Handicapped in Seattle. She has a bachelor's degree from Seattle University. Her parents are Herbe and Barbara Gustafson of Skokie, Ill.

*Darla Harms*, Grace Hill Church, Whitewater, Kan., has begun a two-year MVS assignment in the Yarrow Gardens Preschool and Recreation Program in Arvada, Colo. Her term began in September. Her parents are Galen and Roberta Harms of Whitewater.

*Kroekers*

*Lam*

*Sanders*

*Janna Harrold*, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., began a two-year MVS term in September as arts and crafts director for the Boys and Girls' clubs of Fresno, Calif. She has a bachelor's degree from Emporia (Kan.) State University. Her parents are Donald and Marilyn Harrold of Newton, Kan.

*John* and *Valerie Klaassen*, Grace Hill Church, Whitewater, Kan., began one-year MVS terms in August as resident managers of Yarrow Garden Apartments in Arvada, Colo. She has a bachelor's degree from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. His parents are Melvin and Donna Klaassen of Whitewater. Hers are Varden and Luella Loganbill of Moundridge, Kan.

*John* and *Grace Kroeker*, Nutana Park Church, Saskatoon, were assigned in September to two-year MVS terms as home-repair worker and secretary respectively for Mennonite Home Repair in Wichita, Kan. He has a master's degree from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. She has a bachelor's degree from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

*Joyce Kroeker*, Martensville (Sask.) Church, began a two-year MVS term in September with the Friendly Visitor Service in St. Catharines, Ont. Her mother is Merla Kroeker of Martensville.

*Sophia Lam*, Memorial Baptist Church, Middlebury, Vt., was assigned in June for one year under MVS as a social worker with Transcultural Family Counseling Center in Oklahoma City. She has a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College. Her parents are Mei Wan Lam and Wai King Chan of Hong Kong.

*Gwen Peachey*, Akron (Pa.) Church, has accepted an assignment with MCC as hostess at its SELFHELP Crafts Tea Room, serving until mid-October. She has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., and a master's degree in education from Millersville (Pa.) University. Her parents are Irvin S. and Alice Indergard Wenger of Edmonton.

*Erin Sanders*, St. Elizabeth Catholic Church, Denver, began a three-year MVS term in August as a teacher in the Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley. Her parents are Earl Sanders and Betty Leff of Lakewood, Colo.

**Freeman (S.D.) Junior College** has been accepted for affiliation with the North Central Association as a candidate for accreditation by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Formal notification of this approval was sent to president Art DeHoogh in August.

## Administrative position

### Secretary for Asia

Commission on Overseas Mission
General Conference Mennonite Church

Position available: **March 1985**

Person needs administrative and relational skills, overseas experience, willingness to travel and a commitment to the world mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

Responsible for administration of COM program and personnel in Asia.

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—instruct and provide the channels for marketing products;
—conduct some feasibility studies of the tourism trade within the area and in some instances out of the province.

*Apply in writing to:*
*Dave Ringer, Personnel Services*
*Mennonite Central Committee Canada*
*201-1483 Pembina Highway*
*Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8.*


# New this fall from Herald Press

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*John L. Ruth* captures the history of eastern Pennsylvania Mennonites in an authentic "narrative account." Beginning with the European ancestors, he follows the immigrants to Pennsylvania (1683-1773), narrates the division of 1847, and then describes the life of both Franconia and Eastern District conferences up to the year 1947. Illustrated by more than 80 photographs, drawings, and maps in over 600 pages.
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***The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler***
*C. Arnold Snyder* wrote this first full-length biography and analysis of the thought of Michael Sattler, the noted Anabaptist leader, martyr, and author of the Schleitheim Articles. It breaks new ground around the Roman Catholic (Benedictine) roots of Swiss and South German Anabaptism.
Hardcover $19.95, in Canada $25.95

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*Wilbert R. Shenk* presents a well-rounded, biblical base for the mission of the church. Volume 15 in Mennonite Faith Series.
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# mission: city

**This, too, is Africa.**

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Now more than ever, a Christian witness and fellowship are needed for the lonely, the lost and those looking for hope.

Churches are being planted. COM is there as part of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission team, working with national believers in Kinshasa, Kananga, Maseru and Gaborone. Our missionaries are assisting in urban Africa as God continues to grow His church.

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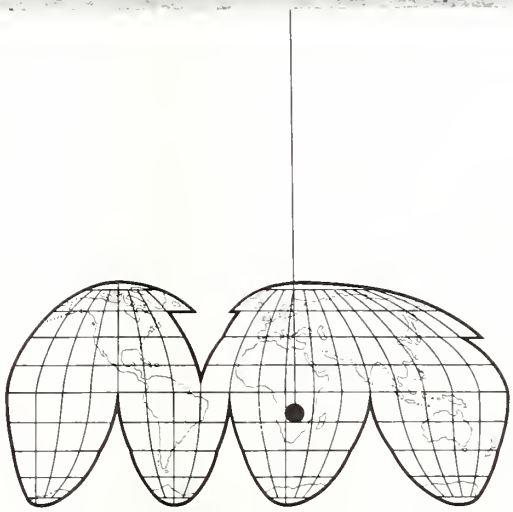

**Commission on Overseas Mission**
General Conference Mennonite Church
722 Main Street, P.O. Box 347
Newton, Kansas 67114

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4

# Grandmother writes Mennonite history

*Mary Sprunger*

Anna Brons' (1810-1902) is all but forgotten today. She was a respected Mennonite historian in the 19th century, well-known in both Europe and America. She published her important book, *Ursprung, Entwicklung und Schicksale der Taufgesinnten oder Mennoniten (Origin, Development and Destines of the Anabaptists or Mennonites)*, in 1884. Anna Brons deserves our recognition in this centennial year of its publication for her contribution to Mennonite history.

*Brons hoped that history could revitalize her church. She believed that faith and learning enhanced each other—Mennonites could regain the spirit of the Believers' Church through awareness of their Anabaptist roots.*

Brons spent most of her life in Emden, Germany. Although she asserted herself in the male-dominated academic world, she maintained traditional views about her role as a wife and mother. Not until her household duties (including nine children) began to diminish did she devote herself to Mennonite history. Brons was a 74-year-old grandmother when she published her book.

Brons lived and wrote at a time when Mennonites were just rediscovering their roots. She brought together the Anabaptist and Mennonite experiences into the first comprehensive Mennonite history of significance. She was one of several historians to redeem the battered reputations of the Anabaptists, usually portrayed in Reformation accounts as heretics, fanatics and rabble-rousers.

Brons hoped that history could revitalize her church. She believed that faith and learning enhanced each other—Mennonites could regain the spirit of the Believers' Church through awareness of their Anabaptist roots.

Brons' book was a history of the Mennonites from their Anabaptist origins to the late 19th century. She covered the Swiss Anabaptist beginnings, the Dutch Anabaptists and their development into Mennonites, the Prussian brotherhoods, the first Mennonites in America, the Russian experience and migration, and the French and German Mennonites in the 1800s.

In her book, Brons associated the Anabaptists with an earlier evangelical sect, the Waldenses. Ludwig Keller, a significant but controversial Reformation historian, influenced 19th-century Mennonites with his theory of "old evangelical brotherhoods." He believed that the vision of the early church had passed through a series of religious groups to the Waldenses and then to the Anabaptists. Brons and Keller became friends through a long correspondence and exchanged many historical and theological ideas.

Brons' book affirmed the Anabaptist emphasis on Christian discipleship. On the title page she quoted the Anabaptist mystic Hans Denck: "No one has the power to truly know Christ, unless he follows him in life."

Brons was humble about her academic achievements. She was hesitant to distribute her book beyond Mennonite circles, fearing harsh criticism from Lutheran and Reformed scholars. She asked readers to judge her book with reverence and understanding. They should realize that the work kept her busy and gave meaning to the later years of her life. Brons saw herself as an amateur and referred to her book as "the fruit of a grandmother's spare time."

Other historians, however, recognized the historical merit and importance of this grandmother's work. One Mennonite theologian was impressed with Brons' synthesis of a living, evangelical piety with a liberal, intellectual foundation. The editor of a dictionary of women authors told Brons that she was ". . . the only lady who writes with such expert knowledge and who possesses the experience and information that such a work requires."

Ludwig Keller wrote that "if one considers that Anna Brons was already 73 years old and takes into account the difficulties that come from a task with such varied details, then one must regard with highest esteem that achievement. . . ." He recognized her book as more than the work of an amateur hobbyist.

Brons' interests extended beyond the historical. She worked for both the national unification movement of Germany and the unification efforts among the German Mennonites. She emphasized the need of Mennonite seminaries and enthusiastically supported the Wadsworth Seminary in Ohio. She sent a medallion and a picture of Menno Simons to the school's dedication ceremony in 1866.

*Anna Brons*

Mennonites were aware of Anna Brons not only in Germany and the Netherlands but also in the United States. Sister Hilleganda of Newton, Kan., made a special point of visiting Brons, then 92, on a trip to Europe. Students and professors at Bethel College studied her books.

Anna Brons' contribution to Mennonite history was significant for its time. Later historians have built heavily upon the foundations of this remarkable woman.

*Mary Sprunger, Box 322, North Newton, KS 67117, graduated in May from Bethel College and is currently working on a history of the Commission on Education.*

## Stewardship in stocks

There appears to be a pervasive anti-capitalist mentality among all too many Mennonite theologians and professors. I'm referring to the article "Playing the Market" (July 17 issue). The stock market represents more than a vehicle for speculation and a road to quick riches or poverty for a few "suckers." I would admit quick profits can be made in speculation, but anyone trying to predict and profit from short-term economic trends is as likely to lose as gain.

People buy stocks or other interests in an enterprise for a variety of reasons. Real estate offers potential profit but little liquidity. That is, it is unique and often difficult to market. A business could be purchased but, like real estate, it can be hard to finance and sell, and it requires a high degree of involvement by the purchaser. Gold, silver or other precious metals are candidates but pay no interest and require safekeeping.

The stock market provides equity interest with little or no personal involvement. For listed shares it's easy to track present value by checking the local paper. Many pay dividends, a return on investment. For those who want little direct involvement in managing an investment, the stock market may be a good choice.

Impugning the motives of people who invest in the market is like condemning a community because thieves live there. There is risk in all human action, and classifying risk taking as gambling is absurd.

We are to be wise stewards of whatever resources are entrusted to us. There are many ways to do this, and whichever way we choose requires our prayerful consideration of the consequences. *John Burton, 12999 W. 20th Ave., Lakewood, CO 80401*

Sept. 18

## Peters to Stucky

Kent Stucky suggests (Sept. 11 issue) that I have not been in counsel with MMA. Actually there were several telephone conversations about the article.

I continue to find the MMA investment guidelines confusing and feel that their research is neither solid nor thorough.

I'd recommend three steps: (1) Work with the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, (2) expand the investments review committee to include people from MCC Peace Section, (3) empower the review committee to meet yearly instead of once every five years. *Robert V. Peters, 5 West 29th St., New York, NY 10001*

Sept. 21

**Editor's note:** About 100 foreign readers receive *The Mennonite* either as a private gift or as a gift through our office. These subscriptions are again coming due.

Would you like to support such gifts? Please mail donations to *The Mennonite, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*, or to *600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4*. Gifts are tax deductible.

## Our subtle racism

Thanks to Hubert Brown for publicly asking the question, "Can I Be Black and Mennonite?" (July 17 issue). And thanks to Gary D. Jensen for replying to Brown's article (Sept. 11 issue). I was beginning to wonder whether anyone took this issue seriously enough to comment on it.

I found Jensen's response disturbing for several reasons. First, I think it is highly presumptuous of us white folks (I am an ethnic Mennonite) to assume that the Mennonite cultural heritage includes circumstances *more* tragic than the black experience. Slavery was no picnic. African slaves were first kidnapped from their homeland, then transported to the Americas under such subhuman conditions that thousands died on the way. Those that lived were bought, sold and owned as pieces of property. They were brutally treated and terribly overworked. The women were frequently raped by their masters and were forced to bear the children of whatever men their masters chose to produce offspring with them. Slave families were often systematically separated. The dehumanizing treatment of blacks did not end with the Emancipation Proclamation. Lynchings, tortures and houseburnings perpetrated against blacks were common for many years and still occur occasionally.

Jensen claims Mennonites do not have to apologize for the victimization of blacks because Mennonites have also been victimized. I disagree. Brown states that "every black person in the United States is injured or cheated by the conscious or unconscious system of white superiority." Likewise, every white person in the United States has benefited from this system at the expense of blacks and other minorities. I do not think we should wallow in guilt about this, but I do think we should act responsibly to change the system which perpetuates these inequities.

Jensen implies that Brown's dilemma is caused by his inability to understand and accept Mennonite beliefs. I do not believe this is true. Nowhere does Brown detract from the fundamentals of Mennonite faith. I do notice his frustration with a church which professes to take the teachings of Christ seriously but shows so little appreciation for black Americans and so little concern for their sufferings. How can we pretend to love our black neighbors as ourselves if we ignore them and do nothing to change the system which oppresses them? And how can we expect black Americans to feel welcome in our church if we do not value their experiences and do not care what happens to them?

Brown asked, "Can I be black and Mennonite?" My reply is, "I hope so." If I ever become convinced that this is not possible, I will have to turn my back on the church of my ancestors and move on. *Barbra Baumgartner Gant, 2726 N. Wilton, Chicago, IL 60614*

Sept. 24

## Non-white Mennonites

Gary D. Jensen's letter (Sept. 11 issue) indicating that blacks probably don't have a place in the Mennonite church disturbed me greatly.

I can't help but wonder if he doesn't realize that there are now almost as many non-white as there are white Mennonites worldwide and that there are hundreds of non-white Mennonite ministers? There are even a few congregations here in the United States, particularly in the east, where white Mennonites are a minority. According to statistics, white Mennonites will soon be a minority in the worldwide Mennonite community.

For the Anabaptist movement to degenerate into an ethnic or cultural grouping would be a disaster. Thank God, the worldwide Mennonite/Anabaptist community is already multicultural and multiracial.

If our 16th-century mothers and fathers died to preserve some kind of ethnic or cultural grouping, they died in vain. *Terry Miller, Box 293, Freeman, SD 57029*

Sept. 25

# They ordained a minister

*Bill J. Leonard*

The evening was cold, the ordaining council a relatively standard Baptist gathering of preachers, deacons and other leaders of the Wolf Creek Baptist Church in Wolf Creek, Ky. Seated next to the blazing fire, the candidate, a recent graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, seemed adequately prepared for assorted questions about God, the universe and other things.

After prayer, we began with that basic Baptist inquiry: Describe your conversion to Christ and your call to the ministry. The candidate's response was vintage Southern Baptist: Born in a Christian home . . . grew up in the church . . . father a pastor . . . converted at age five . . . "walked the aisle" . . . public profession of faith . . . baptized. Nurtured in Baptist organizations: Sunday school . . . youth camps . . . girls' auxiliary . . . revivals. Constantly urged to make total commitment to Christ . . . follow him wherever he might lead. Adolescent rebellion . . . "rededication" to Christian living . . . a growing sense of God's call to "vocational Christian ministry" . . . a period of struggle . . . finally a "surrender" to God's call to ministry . . . a call to preach the gospel.

There it was: a moving account of private call and public response typical of Southern Baptist ordinands since 1845. The difference was the gender of the candidate. Cindy Harp Johnson is a product of Southern Baptist piety. She listened to teachers and preachers, to parents and revivalists and simply did what they said she must do, commit her life to Christ and follow his will wherever it might take her. She had concluded that faithfulness to God's will involved a call to pastoral ministry. She asked merely that the people who nurtured her in the faith recognize her response.

The Wolf Creek Baptist Church did just that. The council voted unanimously to recommend her ordination by the congregation. Few Southern Baptist churches would do so. Indeed, the question of women's ordination may be the catalyst which ultimately brings schism to a diverse and increasingly disoriented denomination. On that issue, questions of Baptist piety and dogmatism collide.

Southern Baptists carry their piety close to the heart. For years, personal experience with Christ transcended doctrinal precision in most SBC congregations. The essential question was not, "What do you believe *about* Jesus?" but, "Do you *know* Jesus personally, in your heart?" Personal experience, a continuing relationship with Jesus Christ, was the bulwark of Southern Baptist evangelism, against which the gates of hell seemed unable to prevail. "When Jesus asks you to do something, you must do it," Baptists taught their young people. The titles of hymns of invitation tell the story: "I Surrender All," "Only Trust Him," "Just As I Am," "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go" and "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go, Dear Lord."

*None of the Southern Baptist women who have sought ordination remember being told that there was one call they could never hear or one commitment they could never make.*

It was inevitable that Southern Baptist women, nurtured on this kind of piety, challenged to this kind of commitment, would respond to the call to ministry. None of these women who have sought ordination remembers being told that there was one call they could never hear or one commitment they could never make.

Thus Southern Baptists can look to their own teaching and piety for the cause of the increase in the number of women seeking ordination. They have simply taken their own Sunday school teachers, pastors and parents at their word: "If you believe God has called you to do something, do it, no matter what others may say."

Dogmatics are now trying to pass a series of disclaimers through the state and national conventions. "Do whatever God commands," they insist, "unless you are a woman and feel called to preach." In the short run, they may succeed in getting such resolutions passed. Given our democratic polity, they have a

right to try. My suggestion, however, is that formal resolutions are too little, too late. These proclamations will affect a few seminary graduates and denominational employees. But to deter women's ordination in the long run, the dogmatists must transform Southern Baptist piety altogether. They must change the way we tell our children about faith, salvation and discipleship. They must bring their disclaimers to bear on Sunday school teachers and youth camp leaders. They must place limitations on the way Southern Baptists describe and live out the ways of God in the lives of human beings. They must teach us to sing "Wherever he leads I'll go, unless. . . ."

And that is why the legalists are doomed to failure. Our piety is too deep, our sense of divine providence too profound. I realized that at Cindy Harp Johnson's ordination service. Wolf Creek Baptist Church is no liberal, urban congregation peopled with seminary professors and other theological pinkos. It is country—situated on Kentucky Route 228 just above the Ohio River. Its congregation is hard-core Southern Baptist, meeting in a nice brick building with a picture of the Jordan River painted behind the baptistry. The members are farmers, homemakers and retired people—and to the last one they voted to ordain Cindy Harp Johnson to the gospel ministry.

The ordination service was a moving experience. Cindy's sister played the piano, her mother read Scripture, her brother-in-law sang, her father gave the prayer, her husband presented her with a Bible, and two of her professors, one male, one female, preached.

But it was the laying on of hands that convinced me that Southern Baptist piety is stronger than dogmatism. Cindy knelt and the ordained preachers and deacons initiated the rite of the laying on of hands. Then, since the congregation authorizes ordination, all the members were invited to participate in that powerful symbol of "setting aside." They came, young and old, men and women. The formal laying on of hands turned into emotional embraces. Tears flowed freely. Then I caught sight of an old woman hobbling her way to the front, bracing herself on first one pew, then the next. It was Miss Ethel, the matriarch of the congregation and the personification of Baptist feminine piety. She reached out for Cindy, hugged her close and said, "I love you, honey, and I'll support you, whatever you do." There was not a dry eye left in the place.

If they want to stop women from seeking ordination, Southern Baptists must give up much of their devotion. If they do, they may give up something of the Spirit as well.

After the service, we adjourned to the basement for a lunch the likes of which you would expect in a rural church. Leftover hugs and tears went well with fresh green beans and turnips. At lunch I heard the people speak of this woman the way they would of any decent minister. "I don't know how I would have made it this year if she had not helped me." "Her sermons mean so much to me." A deacon said it best. "We don't think of it as ordaining a woman. We're just ordaining a minister."

*Bill J. Leonard is professor of church history at Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Ky. This article is reprinted by permission from* The Christian Century, *May 2, 1984, pp. 455-6. Copyrighted.*

# Who am I, Lord?

*Evelyn Nunemaker Krehbiel*

Who am I, Lord?

Today I seem to have many choices. Do I?
Am I a body and soul welded to a man's rib?
Am I a seller of purple?
a grower of greens?
a squeezer of oranges?

Whose time is it—
that time measured by the two whirls daily
of the hands on my racing clock?
Whose time is it—
Does it belong to my husband?
Is it my children's while they remain at home?
Is it my employer's?
Is it mine?

You have given me only 24 hours in my day.
Why do I feel I have work for 30 hours?
Is it indirectly you who gives me those plans and assignments?
Or is it someone else—like me—
or those persons you've given me
to care about?

How on earth can I cope with the frustrations of time?

Lord, I feel as if I'm living my life in parentheses.
I am a wife (except when the children are under foot).
I am a mother (except when my husband and I,
or I alone
find refuge—dare I call it refuge?—
away from my cherished children).
I am an employee (except when some crisis at home
begs my thoughts and energies).

I am a person.
*Am* I a person?
I want to feel the living, all in one beautiful piece.
I don't want to feel the parentheses.

Lord, help me to see the unity.

# books

## Learning from history

**Maintaining the Right Fellowship** *by John L. Ruth (Herald Press, 1984, 608 pages)*

*Reviewed by J. Herbert Fretz, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517*

Many of us have eagerly awaited this regional history subtitled "A Narrative Account of Life in the Oldest Mennonite Community in North America." The locale of this 300-year story was the focus of Bethlehem '83, when thousands from the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church met in Bethlehem, Pa., the summer of 1983 for the first time jointly. This "oldest Mennonite community" centers in Bucks and Montgomery counties, north of Philadelphia.

Author John L. Ruth, native storyteller, Mennonite minister and trained literator, has given us a splendid interpretive history, chock-full of family names and the colorful feelings and foibles of folklore. He writes for the ordinary reader "feeling a hunger for a story" more than the intellectual or fellow historian "seeking data for the proof of a thesis." Some readers from a distance across Canada and the United States may be excused if they peruse lightly some of these details.

But let no one think this is just another regional history of nostalgic value only to the native. Here is the place where present North American Mennonitism began (including the first Mennonites to migrate to Canada). Here is the place where the largest and longest-lasting schism among present-day North American Mennonites took place in 1847, directly influencing the beginnings of the General Conference movement of 1860. Even more important for the majority of General Conference Mennonites who came later and do not consider themselves a part of this schism is the story of why the vast Russian Mennonite migrations of 1870 and later chose to join the small, young General Conference movement rather than the older Mennonite Church.

Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons for all Mennonites to read this work is to discover anew the failures of both sides to communicate in the 1847 schism and its regrettable aftermath during the American Civil War period. All of us need to read again the repetition of such failures down through the Modernist-Fundamentalist controversy of the 1920s and 1930s, and even during the perils of war and peace encountered in the 1940s. Could it be that once again we need this story, since some of us are conscientious objectors to what we perceive to be a too secular official line coming from our Mennonite schools and publications, while others of us perceive ourselves to be defenders of the faith in our institutions?

Ruth's title, "Maintaining the Right Fellowship," borrowed from the pen of Hinrich Kassel, a south German Mennonite minister (an ancestor of many today in eastern Pennsylvania), expresses well the dominant motif the author sees running through the three centuries. Some of us still remember hearing the Pennsylvania expression the author quotes often: "We must 'keep house' in the congregation."

All of us in the Mennonite Church and General Conference would do well to read the author's epilogue, cogently titled "Restoring the Right Fellowship," to see ourselves not only as heirs of the past but harbingers of a new unity in Jesus Christ waiting for us.

## Managing conflict

**Discover Your Conflict Management Style** *by Speed B. Leas (Alban Institute Publications, 1984, 23 pages)*

*Reviewed by Barry Bartel, Bethel College, Box 25, North Newton, KS 67117*

This short booklet is packed full of valuable information. A 45-question "Conflict Strategy Instrument" helps the reader identify strategies in managing differences. The reader then tallies the answers to the two-choice questions, which correspond to six styles for managing differences: persuading, compelling, avoiding/accommodating, collaborating, negotiating and supporting.

The reader's score is then a springboard from which to consider each strategy. Leas includes four sections for each strategy: a description of the strategy, a "how to" and a "when to" section, and a description of probable outcomes. The organization, information and practical examples help one to look critically at each strategy. Leas shows that though some strategies are more helpful in managing differences, each of the six strategies is necessary at some point.

This booklet is not a quick-and-easy checklist. It can be read and understood quickly, but without careful consideration our personal motives may still override the valuable warnings and suggestions Leas offers. This booklet is an excellent aid in discovering, evaluating and improving your conflict management styles.

# film

## Evangelism tool

**The Prodigal,** *a Worldwide Pictures film written and directed by James F. Collier, produced by Ken Wales*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, assistant editor*

Greg Stuart is the prodigal, a 21-year-old estranged from his father. We see him living in a makeshift hut on an island in Puget Sound, carving out his independence from a well-to-do and at least nominally Christian family. His brother, Scott, a seminary student seeking to live with the poor in a factory district, finds Greg and invites him to their father's birthday dinner. To everyone's surprise, Greg shows up, then stays at home and wins a job as a tennis instructor.

We follow the tensions within the family as they discover and encounter a variety of difficulties. A few of these are well portrayed, while a few are less convincing, marked by stereotypical characters. The events pile up, and some scenes suffer from poor direction. The actors' movements seem hurried at times, and subtlety is sacrificed to making sure the audience gets the point.

This is most evident toward the end when a Billy Graham crusade serves as the climax in which difficulties reach a resolution. *The Prodigal* is less a moving drama in its own right than a tool for Graham's message of salvation. This is effectively done, but I believe it diminishes the power that the film could have had.

The film tells an engrossing story, and despite some flaws in acting and direction, it is well shot. Christian audiences will enjoy it. It contains only a few obscene words, like "nigger."

# MEDITATION

## Beware of EBS

At the MCC-VS (Ontario) retreat this year I learned something profound and new from the parable of the lost son (Luke 15). It was a warming discovery yet pregnant with warning.

My husband and I were teaching about the need for three broad priorities in every believer's life. **God.** We must learn to know him and to know his heart's longings for us. We must make time to learn to adore and worship him. These disciplines aren't easy to take up in a society where egalitarianism and materialism are the highest values.

**The body of Christ.** We need to know that we were never meant to fly solo after we are born into God's family. Brothers and sisters in the body of Christ have been given spiritual gifts that, when used correctly, will help each of us grow to be more like Jesus. The corporate result is, "The whole body will be healthy, growing and full of love" (Ephesians 4:16 *LB*). We need to learn that we need one another in the body of Christ to become cleaner, more mature and effective ministers of the gospel.

**Our work in the world and our witness to it.** If our relationship to God is vibrant and current, if our relationships in the body of Christ are healthy and love-permeated, then our work-witness in the "worlds" in which we are placed will be redemptive and life giving.

During that weekend at Camp Iawah we studied Luke 15:1-3, 11-32 in small groups. It had a familiar but elusive message. As we dug deeper into the scope and implications of Jesus' powerful teaching in this parable, each of us saw something freshly new for us. Most of us could identify with the elder brother more easily than with the younger one. As we discussed our honest empathy with the frustrated, hurt older son, we asked ourselves why he had the reactions he had. These were so opposite from the delighted joy and relief which the father felt on the return of his delinquent son. Why?

We concluded that the older son, although he had lived with his father all the time, had never really known his father's heartfelt longings for the younger son's metamorphosis and return.

The older son had been doing business for his dad, tending the farm and doing the work he thought his father wanted done. But if the older son had taken time for in-depth communication with his father and learned to watch his body language, would he not have known how much his father longed for the return of the prodigal son? He might well have gone to search for his kid brother in the far country and pleaded with him to come home because he was breaking his father's heart.

Instead, when the younger brother did come home, the older brother sulked and accused his father of unfair treatment. No celebration for him. No relief. No joy. Only self-pity and recriminations. Why? Because although he'd been faithfully doing what he thought was his father's work, he hadn't known the heartfelt wishes and will of his dad.

What a warning. As Christian workers we could all see ourselves falling into the elder brother syndrome (EBS). I dare not frenetically do what I think is my Father's work without giving him first priority in my life. If I do give him first place, the result will be that my attitudes and reactions will be like my Father's. If I don't, the results will be disunity, backbiting, sourness of spirit, loss of opportunities, loss of joy . . . like that elder brother.

*Betty Mae Dyck*

# CONTENTS

Any person who lets the Jesus of the Bible penetrate his or her life becomes a spiritual pilgrim—a person becoming, a person on the way, a person looking for a kingdom greater than this earth has yet seen, a person knowing that reformation is never complete. It is the Jesus way. We are sojourners with mission in our being—all of our being. In Jesus, the Living Word, we find light, leaven, salt, bread and the Way so that we can pass it on.

This issue is dedicated to the Reformation which begins in us when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. It is a lifelong mission.


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CORRECTION

"An Encouraging Chapter on Abortion," the lead story in the Oct. 9 issue, was written by editor Bernie Wiebe. Inadvertently, his name was left off. We regret the error.


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# editorial

## God is building a new Mennonite house

"Within the first three decades (1525-55) . . . [Anabaptists] were intensely evangelistic. Their rapid growth startled both the reformers and the Catholics" (Donald R. Jacobs, *Pilgrimage in Mission*, p. 91). They had a spirit of conviviality (enjoying their spiritual life together) which was radically fresh, dynamically exciting, magnetically attractive and spiritually fulfilling. Converts swarmed over much of Germanic Europe in large numbers.

They had no planned mission or reformation strategy. Nor was the movement homogeneous. People who encountered the living Jesus Christ tried to live the Jesus way as best they understood it from studying the Bible.

But this mission zeal did not last. Severe persecution from state and church—Reformed and Catholic—led to détente. Anabaptist splinters now worked to solidify around their remnants.

Don Jacobs in his book says that the first-generation Anabaptists were so radically *confrontational* in their witness that it drew reaction from all people. They were then given a choice to change or to be wiped out.

The Anabaptists chose to survive. So they changed their style to a new form of radical confrontation that was actually also a radical *accommodation*.

Their new confrontation was to withdraw into isolated and insulated communities. Here they still enforced radical demands one upon another. These communities were a stark contrast to most of the world. That was implicitly confrontational and somehow satisfied those who still read the gospel to be evangelistic.

The raging fires of our early decades became heaps of glowing embers. Mission was now focused on building a pure church and living the gospel.

For 300 years the two themes of confrontation and accommodation, evangelism and discipleship, ecclesiology and missiology, witness and life were never well integrated in our history. They were both there and somehow coexisted.

When in the late 1800s and early 1900s a fresh spirit started to fan a missionary flame, it met considerable resistance that has not been fully overcome to this day.

As Jacob says in the book, the choice was perceived as to keep the church pure *or* to missionize. They could not see the accommodation in their kind of confrontation. Their restrictive language, customs, dress and requirements often became a new circumcision, a new legalism, a new pharisaism disguised to defend the faith.

Mennonites have had to rediscover the essence of God's coming among his people. God lived personally with his creatures in Eden. He "tabernacled" with Israel in the wilderness. And he "tabernacles" (John 1:14) among his people today.

Israel resisted "pilgrimage." Once in the Promised Land, they demanded a temple and a priesthood to intercede for them.

Mennonites fall to the same temptation. We want to formalize our churches, standardize how we understand the Bible, and have powerful priests who lead for us. Let others accommodate to us if they dare "measure up."

In stark contrast, Jesus models a pilgrim life that joins to people at their places of need. This life exhibits a quality of covenant—mutual commitment—that is secure without temples and priests. Jesus people become a people on the way moving closer to a sure goal: the face of God. In such communities sin cannot stand; it must be cleansed. Eyes are upward and outward because God is with them. We are God's tabernacle among a world wandering in many wildernesses.

Mennonites are becoming such a new spiritual house. Today we are a multitongued and multicolored mosaic with fellowships in 41 nations, programs in over 70 countries and mission efforts average 80 converts per day. We start a new church every 36 hours and we give about $25 million annually to reach out (Jacobs, *Ibid*). Our global family has grown to over 700,000 adults (over 2 million when we include children).

It is a new Mennonite house that is both accommodational and confrontational. At the center is Jesus Christ. Because of him we can be hopeful and joyful pilgrims in today's world. *Bernie Wiebe*

# THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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**"Feed my lambs....
Tend my sheep....
Feed my sheep...." (John 21).**

**Commission on Overseas Mission issue focusing on Africa**

# God builds his church in Burkina Faso

*Anne Garber*

Traoré Siaka was facing a crisis in his job. Having risen rapidly within the ranks of a sugar research station, Siaka's presence and education threatened his more mediocre seniors. They sought to belittle him in every way they could and to make his life miserable. Feeling terribly alone in his suffering (not even his family understood what he was going through), he turned to God. Though he had never before in his life talked to God in a personal way, he realized that God alone knew he was innocent and suffering injustice. So God became his only understanding and sympathetic friend.

After much prodding from his Friend above, Siaka left his job on Feb. 19, 1979. His family and friends thought he was crazy, especially when jobs were so scarce in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). The story got back to his own village that he had actually gone crazy. When he arrived, everybody kept a cautious distance until they realized that the only crazy thing he had done was quit his job.

With plenty of free time on his hands, he read any literature talking about God, first Jehovah's Witnesses materials and then a Catholic catechism, at which point he found out who Jesus was and believed in him (April 1979). Later, from May to August of 1979, as he wandered from city to city on what appeared to be an aimless pilgrimage, he acquired a New Testament. He immediately read it from cover to cover. A little later he found the entire Bible and also read the Old Testament. Returning to his village, he heard of Protestant missionaries 15 kilometers north in Orodara. In September Siaka found his way to their home.

The Entzes and the Rempels had arrived in Burkina Faso late in 1978. Having nicely settled in, and focusing all their efforts on trying to learn Dioula, they had not expected to meet Siaka. Yet here he was, desperately seeking their support. None of his family was Christian. His father, a Muslim, initially rejected him. Here in the Orodara community he found a new family who could nurture him in his walk with the Lord. Siaka's presence and enthusiasm sustained the two couples during those rough and frustrating beginnings when he and they were the only faithful church attenders. Although he was quick to learn from his elders, he didn't quite agree with their low-key evangelistic strategy. He wasn't about to keep his mouth shut when he was bursting with new life and joy.

Siaka's new faith was strong and intense. He had already read the Bible and put into practice a number of its teachings. But one discouraging thing he was to learn was that Christians, alas, are not perfect and often have a difficult time living according to the law of love, even when it comes to relating to fellow Christians. He realized that often our imperfect personalities hang out in just the wrong way, and as a result, Christians get lots of practice in forgiving and being forgiven and simply accepting people for what they are.

As he grew in his faith, he participated in a more concrete way in the Orodara ministry. First, he opened a Christian bookstore, which served as a public contact for anyone who might be interested in God's Word. Siaka quickly acquired friends who would often come to the store just to talk to Siaka because he was warm and friendly and had a

*Traoré Siaka (left) confers with AIMM missionary Dennis Rempel. Siaka, a Christian since 1979, has started a bookstore, led evangelistic work, helped with the church in Orodara and in nurturing the believers at Kotoura.*

sympathetic ear. Siaka ministered to more than one young man who was facing some personal struggle in his life.

At church he initially served as a translator when asked, but eventually he also prepared and gave the Sunday message to the tiny group of believers. When there was a need to minister to Christians in outlying villages, he eagerly participated.

Soon there was no doubt in his mind that someday he wanted to work full time in preaching and teaching God's Word. So back to school he went to acquire a high school diploma in preparation for theological studies.

**Siaka meets Cheba.** During Siaka's final school year (1982-83), God's Spirit was moving in Cheba's heart. When Gail Wiebe and I arrived in his village, Kotoura, on Nov. 25, 1982, as linguistic workers, he was ready and willing to seek God's truth. We didn't know that. We were busy trying to learn Senufo greetings and culture in hopes that someday we could effectively communicate the gospel in *their* language and cultural context. But Cheba, son of our host family, wasn't about to wait for that. We had just settled down in our temporary housing with the bare essentials when we casually introduced Cheba to a Bible story picture book of the prodigal son. Fueled by the desire to learn French and attracted to the story itself, Cheba painfully struggled word by word through the book. It took him weeks to accomplish the task but he opened his ears to its message and wanted to hear more. As his French slowly improved, we were able to explain more and more about following God and Jesus. He understod more clearly what God's love was all about when Dennis Rempel and Siaka, on their occasional visits, talked with him in Dioula, the common trade language. As Cheba learned Dioula hymns, God's truths were imprinted more solidly in his heart. During this time Cheba asked us many questions. The matter of giving up the practice of sacrificing to the powers that be was particularly difficult for him. But as the months passed, the Spirit slowly nudged and convicted him that God was indeed more powerful than any of the lesser spirits found here on earth and more loving and forgiving than the God he knew from Islam. Cheba came to believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, made all the difference.

Back in Orodara, in July 1983, the school year was over and everyone rejoiced that Siaka had survived those tough high school finishing exams. But instead of rushing off to seminary, he decided to first commit himself to a year of evangelism in the Orodara area.

Finding a fellow Christian, Paul Ouedrago, to help him with the bookstore and eventually take over the operation, Siaka threw himself wholeheartedly into the ministry of the church. His dream was to organize several evangelistic campaigns throughout the year. The first one was scheduled for mid-October 1983. Paul's friend from the Ivory Coast, Almamy, was invited to come and give a series of meetings. All the Christians in the Orodara area were expected to participate in some way.

*Cheba (left foreground) sits in front of AIMM missionary Anne Garber, singing with other believers in Kotoura. On this evening three of the young men's wives made a commitment to Jesus Christ.*

Gail and I wondered whether we should invite Cheba. Would he be ready to accept a formal call to commit his life to Christ? A more likely question was, Were we ready to deal with the consequences if he did?

As the week of evangelism approached, we tentatively asked Cheba whether he would be interested in attending the Friday night meeting. Of course, he was. In fact, he would stay until Sunday morning.

As Cheba sat and listened to Almamy, an ex-Muslim and son of an important Muslim leader, he became convinced that he wanted to commit his life to Christ. On Saturday night, Oct. 15, 1983 (less than 11 months after we arrived in Kotoura), in the privacy and quietness of the Rempels' courtyard, Cheba told Almamy that he wanted to become a Christian. Almamy called Gail and me over and others gathered around us as he led Cheba in a prayer of confession and dedication to Jesus Christ. The next day Cheba drank in every word of Siaka's morning message in Dioula before returning to Kotoura, a new man.

The evangelistic campaign was over. Although a few people had indicated serious interest, Cheba was the only one to make a commitment. God knew, however, that Cheba's conversion was only a small but wonderful beginning of the church in Kotoura. Barely two weeks later, a handful of close friends, convinced by Cheba's testimony, turned their lives over to the Lord. During the past year other individuals, convicted of God's love and truth, have come forward.

Siaka's plan for three more evangelistic campaigns fell through, two of them at the last moment. We were disappointed, but perhaps God wanted us all to help nurture the young believers, to give them a stronger foundation of faith and maturity before calling others to him, so that these too could participate as co-workers in bringing others to Christ and discipling them in their new life.

As a result, in the past year the Entzes, the Rempels, Paul and Siaka—the entire team from Orodara—as well as Christians elsewhere have lent a hand in discipling and teaching the young believers in Kotoura, something that might not have been possible had subsequent campaigns succeeded.

Life isn't always easy for these new believers who live in a society consisting of a mix of Muslim and traditional practices. To say no to a custom that violates Christian principles can create serious tensions within closely knit family units. It is at this point especially that they need support from more firmly established Christians.

I am filled with awe when I see how God's Spirit moves among us, surprising us, temporarily disappointing us, planting the desire for him in the hearts of individuals, bringing them to faith in him, harmonizing the activities and gifts of all God's children so that we as the family of God work together in building the kingdom.

"The wind blows where it pleases. You hear its sound but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit" (John 3:5). •

# Botswana de-illusions missionaries

*Fremont Regier*

Botswana is a process of relearning for many mission workers. Time here has freed us of some of the illusions we held about missions. Some of our long-held assumptions are not true.

**God has always been here.** Some Westerners believe that the missionaries brought God to Africa. We have learned that God has always been in Africa. In the 1970s some Spiritual Churches (SCs) asked for Mennonite Bible teachers to help them with clarity of doctrine and basic Bible knowledge. When Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission workers arrived, they found a lively awareness of God's Spirit already existent in these churches.

**A Spirit orientation.** My experience and training has brought me to a Christological faith orientation. Christ is for me the entry into God's kingdom, and through him I enter the community of believers. But many of the SCs see another person of the trinity—the Holy Spirit—as their entry point. It is the charismatic life and power in the Spirit that attracts new members. Expressions of the indwelling Spirit life include healing, dancing, chanting, seizures and many other manifestations. The SCs may have something to teach us about the Spirit. Jesus instructed his disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Might we have a faith orientation that is too exclusively Christological?

**Not all SC members are anxious to study.** Since SCs had requested Mennonite Bible teachers, I had the illusion that they were anxious to study and would eagerly participate in classes.

After an initial burst of enthusiasm, class attendance is often poor. Though originally AIMM Bible teachers intended to train church leaders, it is often these leaders who stay away from the classes. To attend classes along with their church members can mean to admit an embarrassing lack of knowledge.

**AIMM role is not only teaching.** Since the major focus of AIMM recruitment of workers for Botswana was on Bible teaching in SCs, I assumed it was the main work AIMM personnel would do and these churches would perceive our role to be primarily that of teachers. However, legitimization and advocacy have been high priorities on the SC list of what AIMM workers could provide. My attendance at the Gaborone Spiritual Healing Church is perceived as a legitimizing presence. The pastor has said from the pulpit, "You AIMM people are the only white people who ever enter here." No one else recognizes them. Jonathan Larson was recently asked to help in the robing ceremony of an SC bishop's ordination. Somehow his presence and participation at the three-day ceremony was seen to lend authenticity to it. Because of their lack of formal education, SC leaders experience difficulty in gaining government recognition as authorized marriage officers. Irvin Friesen, Buddy Dyck and Jonathan Larson organize seminars to prepare marriage officers. An official from the government is invited to explain legal requirements, and Jonathan, Buddy and Irvin provide teaching on the implications of Christian marriage and family. These seminars perform a valuable advocacy role for SC leaders.

AIMM personnel serve also in other areas of mission. Ron Sawatzky has taught mathematics for many years in a Teacher Training College (TTC) and at the University of Botswana. Buddy Dyck has taught TTC religious education courses in addition to his SC Bible instruction. Both Buddy and Lois Dyck participate in a prison ministry. Jonathan Larson spends an enormous amount of time as a reconciling, peace-

*Members of the Spiritual Healing Church at Jwaneng, Botswana, greet one another after a worship service.*
*We could learn from their freedom in the Spirit.*

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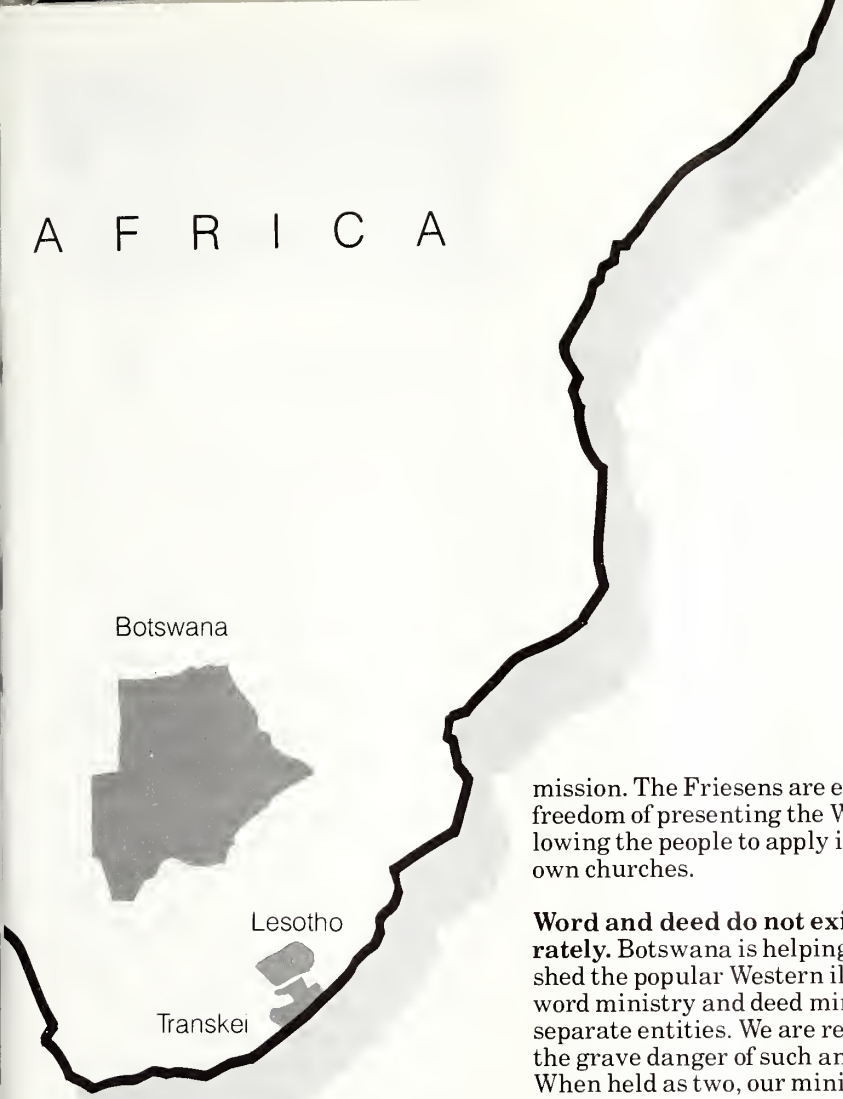


*Larry Hills, left, speaks with Bishop Jacob Magwentshu of Umtata, Transkei. Larry has moved into a village home in Transkei.*

making presence as board chairperson at a Quaker refugee and community center. Henry Unrau is coordinator of religious broadcasting for Radio Botswana in a ministry with a nationwide audience. Mary Kay Larson has a unique leadership role in Botswana's public health program, one of the most progressive programs operating in developing nations today. In addition to family responsibilties, Naomi Unrau works in friendship evangelism and hosting at our Mennonite Ministries guesthouse.

**The old way is not the only way.** Learning to minister in Botswana churches that are on their own in contrast to the traditional mission church setting has been a de-illusioning and joyful process for Irvin and Lydia Friesen, who had extensive earlier experience in Zaire. In the traditional mission setting our tendency was to seek influence and control to change practices. But the Friesens have joyfully discovered a better way in Botswana, realizing that the control foreigners held in the earlier situations was a weakness of our mission. The Friesens are enjoying the freedom of presenting the Word and allowing the people to apply it in their own churches.

**Word and deed do not exist separately.** Botswana is helping many of us shed the popular Western illusion that word ministry and deed ministry are separate entities. We are recognizing the grave danger of such an illusion. When held as two, our ministry is fragmented. On the one hand we omit the gospel and fail to witness to the power of God in development, in agriculture, in health, in reconciliation. On the other, we present a gospel that fails to speak authentically to needs, emotions, conflicts, institutions, oppression and powers in which people find themselves. Even maintaining a balance between word and deed is divisive, faulty theology. It separates a whole into two unnatural parts, forcing them into competition with each other as if one may be justified only by giving more attention and resources to the other. Here SCs have helped us by their emphasis on prayer, which includes all of life. A large part of worship services is the laying on of hands on all the schoolchildren starting a new term (as they all kneel at the front of the church), or on the sick, or on all who have today decided to follow Christ, or for all families with new babies or anyone with special problems.

Joining AIMM and MCC in Botswana into one organization called

*Stephen Monyatsi (see meditation on p. 551) leads the singing at a joint worship service of African Independent Churches (AICs) at Mofeteng, Lesotho.*

## AIMM and COM

The Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission administrates the Africa mission program for five Mennonite mission agencies: Evangelical Mennonite Church of the United States, Evangelical Mennonite Conference of Canada, Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference, North American Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Churches and the General Conference Mennonite Church (through the Commission on Overseas Mission).

The following chart indicates the countries, year work began, number of missionaries supported by COM and the total number of missionaries under AIMM in each country, approximate membership of the national churches and a brief description of the main ministry functions:

| COUNTRY | YEAR BEGUN | AIMM MISSIONARIES SERVING | NATIONAL CHURCH MEMBERSHIP | MINISTRIES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Zaire | 1912 | 41 (36 COM) | 50,000 CMZ<br>3,500 CEM | Pastoral training, church planting/nurture, Bible translation, evangelism—T.E.E., Christian education, medical ministries, radio and cassettes, and agriculture. |
| Lesotho | 1973 | 6 (6 COM) | | Bible teaching for AIC pastors, Christian education and Maseru United Church. |
| Botswana | 1975 | 11 (9 COM) | | Bible teaching for AIC pastors, radio ministry, teacher training and public health. |
| Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) | 1978 | 13 (9 COM) | 18 | Linguistic analysis and Bible translation, evangelism/church planting and public health. |
| Transkei (RSA) | 1982 | 1 (1 COM) | | Bible teaching for AIC pastors. |

Mennonite Ministries has helped us, at least theologically and structurally, to move away from this illusory separation. We are trying to learn what this can mean for us in daily work. Through MM we are active in Botswana with community development, agriculture, health, water resources, handicapped services, resettlement and church growth as part of one total program. We work as one team to faithfully promote the wholeness of one total gospel.

**Where then is our mission in Botswana?** True, we do not bring God to Botswana, but many Batswana who know God exists have not yet committed themselves to a life of discipleship in the transforming power of Jesus Christ. True, many SC members possess a powerful awareness of God's Spirit. Nevertheless, a fixation on the Spirit leads to charismatic excesses.

*The children in Gaborone, Botswana, are enthusiastic to learn new things. But their interest in school can be sidetracked just like anywhere else in the world.*

*Fremont and Sara Regier, co-directors of Mennonite Ministries in Botswana, are trying to demonstrate a wholistic gospel. They bring evangelism and service in one package.*

The SCs do see a special power in Christ's overcoming the devil in the wilderness temptation, the triumphal entry and his resurrection. While they too seek this power, it does not necessarily bring them to the cross for redemption and salvation in Christ. Somehow we must witness to them of the greater fulness of the Trinity—the unity of God includes personal relationship to Jesus Christ.

Because the interest of some SC members in our Western classroom teaching style wears thin, we must seek new approaches. Still, a certain credibility has been built through patient perseverance in AIMM teaching and through the relationships that the teachers have built. Recently several people have come to the Friesens' house seeking Irvin out to help them understand the way of salvation of Christ.

True, though SC Bible teaching requests brought the first AIMM personnel here, SCs also seek authentication and advocacy from us. And many ministry opportunities other than Bible teaching have been uncovered. We can rejoice in the multiplicity of gifts and their uses God gives us. We have had to abandon some old ways and learn new ones. We have been divested of some long-held illusions.

Frequently people tell us, "You ought to start a Mennonite church here. Botswana needs the values and faith your volunteers bring to mission." But in a country where hundreds of churches already are operating, we have chosen to work with existing churches. We regard our calling, our mission, to be that of building on present consciousness to new heights of awareness, to act as midwives by affirming in others the fulfillment of their God-given abilities. Our mission is in friendship and presence in the shared studying and learning together, in affirming and legitimizing, in completing and fulfilling so that by all means—and it's likely that more exciting new means will yet be discovered—we might win some to Jesus Christ and his kingdom. •

# The missions cycle

*Earl W. Roth*

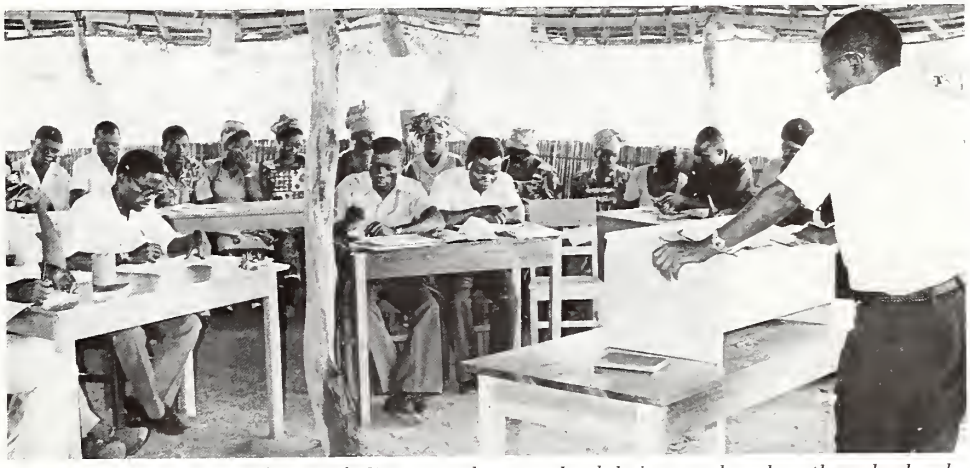
Christian missions can no longer be described as a straight line with a starting point and an ending point—a responsibility that can be completed in a given time—nor as missionaries going from Western to non-Western nations. We need to view missions as a continuous cycle, involving believers of all races on all continents. The apostle Paul explains in Romans 12:4-6 that a parallel exists between the believer's physical body with its many parts with different functions and the community of believers in Christ as a spiritual body: "For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another" (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-17, Ephesians 4:11-12, 15-16).

This community of believers, the body of Christ, has become a worldwide reality. All who are children of God through faith in Jesus Christ are members of the body of Christ and are spiritually united to Christ. Believing members of churches and congregations which were planted by the evangelistic efforts of missionaries, also members of Christ's body, are also responsible to obey the command of Christ expressed in the Great Missionary Commission: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved, but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15). (See also Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:47, John 20:21, Acts 1:8.)

This commission involves the message of Christ's death and resurrection, personal repentance, forgiveness of sin and a new relationship with Christ, the Son of God. This new life is given to all believers and to all congregations of believers. Missions is the common witness of these things by the body of Christ to the whole world.

Though separated by political boundaries, organizations, governments, race or language, all believers are in eternal relationship with Christ and with one another. The source, bond and consciousness of this unity is in Christ. (See Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13-20; Ephesians 1:22-23).

Oneness in Christ became total through the ministry of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5; John 3:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 13:14) regardless of organizational diversity and personal distinctiveness. John 17 records Christ's High Priestly prayer concerning the members of his body that "they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that thou didst send me" (John 17:21). Christ was praying for the kind of spiritual oneness that would be a visible expression of his love for the world—a oneness of purpose and concern (v. 24). He was sending believers into the world to complete his mission. "As thou didst send me into the world, I also have sent them into the world" (v. 18).



*After the national people become believers and start to lead their own churches, they also heed the Great Commission and prepare to spread the gospel overseas.*

Christ was sent into the world by his Father to make the truth of God known (John 17:21-26) and to bring salvation to all people (John 17:3, 14; Matthew 18:11). Inasmuch as Jesus' prayer for the disciples was not limited to the immediate apostles (John 17:20), each Christian is responsible to communicate God's truth.

The spiritual unity of believers requires a visible expression in the world. Partnership in mission is one evidence of such an expression. Significantly, Third World mission societies are springing up all over. Ralph Winters, (*Reading in Third World Missions*) writes, "The great new fact of our time must be the emergence of Third World missions. This is the next step of missions today" (p. 55).

Leaders of Third World mission agencies do not see Third World missionaries replacing missionaries from other parts of the world. They call for Western and non-Western mission agencies to join in partnership in obedience to the command of Christ. Such partnership could result in an international, interracial missionary force.

The success of Western missions in establishing young churches in cross-cultural situations is no reason why Western missionaries should stop going overseas. The fact that a younger non-Western church needs further maturity, has fewer supportive resources and has not completely evangelized its own immediate area or country is not a sufficient reason why the church should not send out men and women with the authority to preach the gospel in a foreign setting. W. Harold Fuller, a mission executive and author, says, "(God) is raising up a worldwide force to accomplish the task of missions in this generation . . . a missionary witness from every part of the globe. God has once again brought together the need, the opportunity and the instruments to do his will. Third World missions are a strategic part of his plan for this era" (p. 155).

God's plan will be accomplished. Christ's prayer in John 17 is being answered. Christian missions will be a continuous cycle, turning around and around with no foreseeable end in sight.

*Earl W. Roth, B.P. 4081, Kinshasa 2, Republic of Zaire, is a COM missionary serving with AIMM in evangelism/Bible teaching ministries in Kinshasa and as coordinator of mission services—receiving, purchasing, travel, etc.*

# Ngulubi Mazemba tried again

*Angela Rempel*

Ngulubi Mazemba did not find his true gifts and calling on his first attempt at being involved in an organized church program. He first participated in the SEDA program Fremont Regier developed in Nyanga, Zaire. This agricultural development project enjoyed much popularity for a time. People in surrounding villages were taught how to raise and care for chickens and rabbits. Other agricultural experiments were also tried. Ngulubi went to school for further training in agriculture.

When Regier left Zaire, Ngulubi took on the responsibility of administering the SEDA program. Problems soon developed. An economic crisis engulfed the country. Inflation, problems of transportation and the impossibility of getting feed supplements contributed to the halt of the project. Ngulubi, his wife and their children moved away from the area.

(More recently, Arnold Harder and the Scores, an MCC couple, have picked up the SEDA work, changing its focus somewhat.)

Ngulubi and his family ended up in Kananga, a regional capital and second largest city in Zaire. They found housing in a district called Kananga II, some distance from other established Mennonite churches in the city.

At first, Ngulubi would take the older children on the long walk to church while his wife stayed home with the younger ones. The next week his wife took the older children to church and he stayed home.

Then Ngulubi and his wife began having their own family worship rather than going such a distance to church. Gradually some of their neighbors were interested in joining them for worship. The worship group grew.

On March 13, 1981, the Kananga II church was organized as a parish in the Communaute Mennonite au Zaire. Adult members now number 82 with an attendance up to 200. The group meets in a simple structure made of sticks and poles supporting palm branches. The floor is packed dirt. Chairs, a table, stools and even benches are carried to each service from members' homes. While the structure affords shade and good ventilation in nice weather, any rain automatically cancels planned activities there. Four stone corner posts stand outside the branch-covered shelter, evidence that the congregation is working on erecting a permanent structure.

However, Ngulubi hasn't stopped with one church. He continues to make contacts and has established two more churches plus two preaching points. The second church is Kamayi, organized in 1983 with 67 adult members and an attendance of up to 200. The third is Tshisenge-Ngalakaski, about 12 kilometers away. He regularly goes on foot to each place.

Some of the people in these congregations have a Mennonite background. They have moved to Kananga for jobs or education opportunities not available in the area traditionally assigned to Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission work. But the majority of the people becoming part of these congregations are new believers who do not have a Mennonite background.

*Ngulubi Mazemba and his wife with their youngest of seven children stand at the church sign for Kananga II.*

Ngulubi took a six-month course in Bible training. He is the only ordained pastor currently serving these three churches and two preaching points. He is seeking to train and organize lay leaders. His father, Mazemba Pierre, was one of the first converts and leaders in Nyanga.

In addition to the regular worship services, Ngulubi does counseling, works with youth and holds Bible studies in his home. When there is a special need, he conducts an all-night prayer meeting. His musical abilities have encouraged the good, four-part singing in his congregations.

Ngulubi Mazemba found that he wasn't the one to carry on a farming program. But he didn't give up and has now found that God is working through him to touch many lives in a different way.

*The temporary Kananga II meetinghouse is flanked by concrete cornerstones which symbolize the building that is to come.*

*Angela Rempel, 1701 W. 4th St., Newton, KS 67114, is a homemaker and former missionary to Brazil. She accompanied her husband, Erwin, on some of his Africa travel this past summer.*

# It's dialogue time in Zaire

*Jim Bertsche*

Relations between the Mennonite Church of Zaire and the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission (known until 1971 as the Congo Inland Mission) have passed through several significant stages over the years. There was first the pioneering era when an embryo church was glimpsed in the first few baptized believers along the Kasai River.

Within a few years there were hundreds of believers. Some organized church structure and program emerged with recognized African leaders albeit still much in the shadow of the mission structure. Eventually both church and mission conferences were being held on an annual basis with free participation of missionaries in African conferences but less involvement of Africans in the missionary sessions. This remained essentially the picture until the late 1950s.

The eruption of political independence across black Africa in the early '60s brought with it irrevocable change. As turmoil, insecurity and military revolt sparked massive evacuation of expatriates across Zaire (then known as the Belgian Congo), missionaries station to station suddenly found themselves turning over keys, equipment and cash boxes to local leaders. As missionaries returned to the areas where they had worked, they discovered that a new day had dawned. While welcomed back, the missionaries were informed by African leaders that some new mission church relations were to be established. The key word was *integration*.

An ongoing existence of the mission was assumed, but there was a call for a new collaboration in which the mission would accept the church as an established entity in its own right with a greater voice in setting program and establishing policy. Statutes were drawn up and submitted to the government for approval. While senior pastors were retained as president and vice president of the church, administrative officers such as the legal representative, church treasurer and educational secretaries were selected from a younger generation. These Africans chosen by the church were paired with their missionary counterparts and worked side by side for the time when they would assume similar roles within the structure of the church.

*From left, Tshimowa Bisosa, treasurer, Mbonza Kikanga, president, and Mukansa Ilunga, vice president, of the Communaute Mennonite au Zaire, stand at the CMZ headquarters in Tshikapa. They are ready for further talks.*

As the decade of the '70s dawned, there was great ferment in the Protestant church community across the country. Influenced by a number of factors, Zairian church leadership was by this time convinced that the time had come for a bold new step. The key word now was *fusion*—dismantling the legal mission structures and blending or fusing mission and church. The call was clear.

In response to this, AIMM sent a six-person delegation to Zaire in 1971 to sit with the church leaders and to discuss their vision and proposals with them at length. Out of this consultation came a fusion document totaling 22 articles in which the AIMM board and the leadership of the Zaire church agreed to a new framework within which the two would continue to collaborate. Included in the document were agreements to dismantle the mission as such in Zaire; to recognize the Mennonite church as the new responsible Mennonite entity in Zaire; to cede all mission properties, equipment and holdings to the church; to send missionaries only as invited by the church and once there to accept that they serve under the administration of the church and as assigned; to continue support in response to church requests for financial and material help as such requests meshed with AIMM's priorities and as means were available. It is within the framework of these basic agreements that AIMM and the CMZA have been collaborating in a wide variety of ongoing ministries ever since.

But with passing years much has changed. Zaire of 1984 is a different country than that of 1971. There is a new team of church leadership in place which is better educated, more widely read and traveled and which brings new expectations to the ongoing collaboration with AIMM. Some assumptions brought to the 1971 consultation are no longer shared by all concerned. Expectations of missionaries within the church are under review. In some cases there is no longer clear consensus on the purposes and goals of certain church departments and, consequently, missionary responsibilities within such departments.

It is clearly time for another AIMM/CMZA dialogue. Thus it is that plans are under way for a board delegation to again travel to Zaire for a thorough review and restatement of goals, principles and guidelines as we plot our ongoing collaboration.

Will there again be a key word to describe our ongoing relationships in the future? It is our hope that whatever it is, it will highlight the concept of partnership in mission in the Africa of today and tomorrow.

*Jim Bertsche served for 25 years as an AIMM missionary in Zaire. Since 1974 he has been executive secretary of AIMM, 224 W. High St., Elkhart, IN 46516.*

**For the first time** since its inception in 1976, the Mennonite Central Committee Canada Food Bank is almost empty. The Food Bank, which receives donations from 2,500 contributors, delivered 29,000 metric tons of foodgrains to India, El Salvador, Peru, Mozambique, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia in 1984 through August. It has requests for 5,000 metric tons to fill before the end of the year.

**Despite headlines declaring 1984** election-year prosperity, the United States still faces a gloomy reality—growing and widespread hunger at home—according to Bread for the World. Numerous reports from both government and private sources document increasing hunger in the United States since 1981. Members of Bread for the World conducted surveys in more than 30 communities around the nation from 1982-83. The results indicate that eligibility changes and budget cuts in federal food assistance programs had eliminated many people in need from the programs.

# NEWS

WDC completes self-study

## Energy abounds at Western District Conference

McPherson, Kan. (GCMC)—"Energy" was the catchword of the 93rd annual Western District Conference, hosted this year by First Mennonite Church here. With "Abounding More and More" (from Philippians 1:9) as their theme, 51 congregations (out of 70) sent 220 delegates to the Oct. 19-21 sessions on the campus of McPherson (Church of the Brethren) College. Others attending, including a large group of youth who had parallel programming, swelled the group to twice and three times that number at various times.

Speed B. Leas of the Alban Institute facilitated goal finding for the gathered delegates. Effective church growth, he said, is fed by the all-important releasing of the energy of volunteers. How is this accomplished? We study the action of the Holy Spirit; we study ourselves.

Just as in the human life cycle, energy levels are high at the birth, infancy and growing stages of a congregation; "program" and "administration" are less prominent in these early stages. In its prime, a congregation's energy, program and administration are about equal, and then in "maturity," energy typically lessens. Western District congregations as a group are about between "prime" and "maturity," Leas said.

The base for Leas' presentation and multiple small group responses to it was a year-long study by a special study committee which met repeatedly and also sent questionnaires to every district congregation, drawing conclusions from tabulations. The purpose was "to increase the effectiveness of the Christian witness of the Western District."

Out of the committee's work and the group process of gathered delegates grew a context for direction-setting, moving step by step to a final list of nine to which time, money and personnel will be committed. "That was exiciting," exclaimed Dorothea Janzen, who served on the special study committee that worked closely with Leas. "I've never witnessed this degree of participation," commented Dorothy Nickel Friesen, pastor of Manhattan (Kan.) Fellowship, "in a group this large."

Storytelling also empowers, and there were a number of such times. In his testimony, Ray Morrell from Arlington, Texas, concluded, "I wish I could go to every Mennonite church and reintroduce you to my spiritual—your lineal—ancestors: Menno Simons, Michael Sattler, Hans Denck. Learning to know them strengthened my faith in Jesus." Marilyn Miller likened herself to a midwife sent to Boulder, Colo., to assist in the birth of a new church there. After a "pre-natal period" of 12 years, "Western District started pushing," she explained. Bertha Harder told about an unexpected Christmas in post-World War II Lisbon, Portugal, on her way to an MCC assignment. David Haury, as has become his custom for inclusion in the annual report of the historical committee, related highlights of the conference (then the Kansas Conference) 100 years ago: in 1884, at Emmaus Church near Whitewater, there were just two reports—one on the Mennonite school in Halstead (tuition was raised from $2 to $2.50), and the other by David Goerz, the "traveling pastor."

*Speed Leas (seated, center) talks with WDC participants*

Storytelling continued as someone from Tabor Church (in Kansas) described its exchange of visitors with Arvada Church (in Colorado), bridging a rural-urban chasm. Folks from the Salina and Eden (Moundridge) churches in Kansas mentioned the support that goes between them, joining an emerging congregation with an established one. Clearly, energy is produced by sister-congregation relationships.

Energy was also evidenced in descriptions of the 13 new churches (with two more projected). The list includes Spanish and Chinese congregations, and public prayer in Spanish at the conference was led by Antonio Arevalo of Dallas. Signs of strength include the 30 congregations helping 208 of their people attend Bethel College, and the Oklahoma Youth Squad helping Mennonite Disaster Service rebuild an Assembly of God Church in Tulsa, which, inciden-

**Dean Denner,** 30, a member of Manhattan (Kan.) Mennonite Fellowship, recently spent 20 days in jail for trespassing at the Strategic Air Command base in Omaha, Neb. It was his second offense at the SAC base. At the Sept. 25 trial, Denner defended himself and called Robert Hull, secretary of peace and justice for the General Conference, as an expert witness. Three MMF members attended the trial, and the church held a prayer vigil in Manhattan during the trial. The judge offered Denner probation on the condition that he promise to stay away from the SAC base. Denner said he could not make that promise.

**A federal court ruling** allowing a Toronto man to claim tax deductions for fees paid to religious schools could affect parents of about 120,000 students across Canada. Revenue Canada officials said Aug. 31 they'd not examined a ruling in which Federal Court Judge Francis Muldoon upheld Lyle McBurney's claim for fees made to Christian-sponsored schools during the mid-1970s. Muldoon said that McBurney and administrators of such schools "are, on religious grounds, not satisfied with the nature of education provided by the tax-supported schools of Ottawa and Toronto."

**The September issue** of *Sojourners* charges Jerry Falwell and many of his Christian Right allies with becoming the Reagan administration's court prophets—the name used in the Old Testament for religious leaders in ancient Israel who condoned the king's viewpoint and agenda. The theology of Ronald Reagan is outlined in the issue, and the presidential candidates are examined from a Christian perspective very different from that of the Christian Right.

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tally, astounded the local media.

Creative reporting emerged from several corners. District staff used readings to describe their roles and distributed balloons to delegates, making it an event of praise. The education committee incorporated drama to emphasize the crucial importance of the silent letter "e" in "educate."

Four new congregations were received into the Western District Conference: Fellowship of the New Creation (Tulsa, Okla.), San Antonio (Texas) Mennonite Fellowship, Lawrence (Kan.) Mennonite Fellowhip and Faith Mennonite Church, Montezuma, Kan. The home missions committee has a goal of one new church per year and one subsidized church becoming independent each year.

In farther-reaching concern, the delegates unanimously adopted a resolution presented by Ray Regier for the peace and social concerns committee that the Western District call its members to prayer for and study about Central America, that the committee distribute information on Central American issues and that each congregation appoint a contact person to receive this information.

Three auxiliaries had their own programs, in addition to the conference. Angela Rempel addressed the Women in Mission, describing the "fruit and frustration" of overseas mission work. A former missionary to Brazil, she recently traveled for five weeks to five African countries where the Commission on Overseas Mission has employees. She described, for example, the frustration

*From left: Don Schmidt, WD president; Louis E. McDarwan and Don Reinheimer, San Antonio Fellowship; Doris and John M. Miller, Fellowship of the New Creation, Tulsa, Okla.; Ken Ratzlaff, Lawrence Fellowship; and Frank Keller, WD conference minister*

that in Zaire much of the mechanical infrastructure is inoperative because of the need for spare parts and maintenance, but that the church is growing and the gospel of Jesus Christ is well received.

Western District Mennonite Men heard J. Herbert Fretz of Mennonite Biblical Seminary talk about "The Church—Its Mission and Its School." This year the men have given scholarships to nine district students attending the seminary. Agri-Urban (begun in 1972) is another way that the men are supportive of various projects. And now "Tenth Man" is promising to be a way for Mennonite Men to support young churches. Four seminary graduates who had received financial help from the men were present.

Western District Young People's Union invited Jep Hostetler of Neil Avenue Mennonite Church, Columbus, Ohio, to enhance their theme of "Service as Lifestyle." "Service stations," complete with uniformed attendants, informed the youth about Mennonite Voluntary Service, Mennonite Central Committee and other avenues of "improving their serve." Hostetler also addressed the entire conference on Sunday morning, affirming that "abounding more and more" and servanthood go together.

A 1985 budget of $372,137 (up from $328,062 this year) was accepted by vocal "yes" vote with a few dissensions. Arvada Mennonite Church invited the conference to Colorado for next year's sessions. A motion to adopt a "Pastor/Congregation/Conference Ethics Statement (1984)" was tabled until next year. *Muriel T. Stackley, Helen C. Coon, Rudy Martens*

**The 25th annual Christmas Peace Pilgrimage** from Nazareth to Bethlehem in eastern Pennsylvania will be held on Dec. 15. The 10-mile pilgrimage begins at 1 p.m. in Nazareth and ends at 8 p.m. with a candlelight ceremony in Bethlehem. Mary Lou Kownacki, a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Pa., will speak at the closing ceremony.

**Mennonites from various parts** of North America gathered in Los Angeles to provide a presence of witness and service during the Summer Olympic Games July 28 - Aug. 12. They were part of a larger Christian effort called Outreach '84 which involved some 16,000 people. Coordinated by Stephen Beachy, the Mennonite ministry was sponsored by Greater Los Angeles Area Mennonite Council, Mennonite Board of Missions and the Southwest Conference of the Mennonite Church.

**The University of Winnipeg** is seeking the first director of the Mennonite Studies Centre, which has been established as a result of a gift from a private foundation to carry out teaching, research and community service in aspects of Mennonite life. The centre will be closely related to the Chair in Mennonite Studies, which was established at the university five years ago. The director, to begin Jan. 1, 1985, will require experience in research, administration and fund raising. Anyone interested may write A. Ross McCormack, Vice President (Academic), University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, MB R3B 2E9.

# MCC Canada board apologizes to Japanese Canadians

Winnipeg (MCCC)—Although the first-ever special meeting of the Mennonite Central Committee Canada board was dominated by the resignation of long-term executive director J. M. Klassen, the Sept. 28-29 gathering also featured an apology to Japanese Canadians who suffered war-time internment and loss of property and a statement supporting native protest of military activity in Labrador.

Board members accepted Klassen's resignation with "deep regret and appreciation" and, in naming him executive director emeritus of MCC Canada, noted his 23 years of service with MCC in Korea, at the MCC office in Akron, Pa., and with MCC Canada. Klassen, who served as MCC Canada's first executive director from 1964 to 1970 and again from 1976 to the present, cited poor health, the result of a December 1983 heart attack, as reason for his resignation.

He has been replaced by Waldo Neufeld, MCC Canada coordinator of personnel and administrative services, who will serve as interim executive director until a new one is found.

Although the special meeting was convened to give the 31-person board opportunity to participate more fully in MCC Canada decision making, board members also took time to issue an apology on behalf of Mennonites in Canada to Japanese Canadians who lost property while interned during World War II. The motion to apologize was introduced by Mennonite Brethren representative John Redekop, who stated that "this injustice has bothered me for 20 years." He noted that Mennonites in British Columbia had purchased some of the land taken from the Japanese Canadians and that an apology would help to "make things right."

Board members agreed and passed a motion which states that people of Japanese descent residing in British Columbia were "unjustly uprooted and relocated during World War II," that property confiscated by the government to be held in trust was "sold in violation of that trust" and that some of those properties, especially in British Columbia's lower Fraser Valley, were purchased by Mennonites, "sometimes unknowingly."

The apology was sent to Art Miki, president of the national Association of Japanese Canadians. In a cover letter MCC Canada indicates that it wants to make the apology tangible, possibly by granting a peace scholarship for Canadian university students of Japanese descent.

The board also agreed to support the Innu people of Labrador by drawing the attention of the Department of Defence to Innu complaints about low-flying military aircraft. The letter states that military training flights by low-flying NATO aircraft are seriously affecting the quality of Innu life in Labrador and asks the federal government to "give thorough attention to the growing protest of the Innu."

The letter also urges the federal government to consult with the Innu about flights over their land and states that "we believe that the native peoples of Labrador have a right to say what happens on territories they have inhabited since time immemorial."


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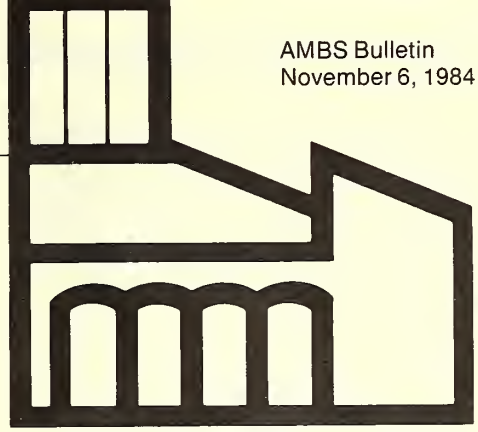


AMBS Bulletin
November 6, 1984

# The gift of God and evangelism

*Henry Poettcker*

The writer of John's Gospel chose seven signs to proclaim God's good news. This Gospel of signs is another of the early church's missionary documents to present Jesus.

The choice of the material was made, according to the writer's own words, for this purpose: "These things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in his name" (20:30).

Interspersed among the sign materials are other encounters not referred to as signs but instructive for a fuller picture of Jesus' unfolding ministry.

One thing becomes clear at the outset: Here in John's Gospel, as in the other three, the question of Jesus' identity is always before us. In chapter one the Logos is seen to take on human form, and shortly thereafter the designation is the Lamb of God. Then John will testify that this is the Son of God.

In chapter two the question of authority is raised. "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" (The antecedent to "all this" is the changing of water into wine and cleansing the temple.)

In chapter three he's the rabbi, the teacher from God. There he receives the appellation Son of Man, and as such sent by God—God's Son.

In chapter four he is seen by the woman as a prophet. Shortly thereafter Jesus is called by her people the Savior of the world.

Observe how each setting of Jesus' unfolding ministry brings its own nuances. This master teacher/evangelist uses a variety of approaches to good advantage. Note, as one illustration, the marked contrast between chapters three and four. Nicodemus comes as an educated theologian. This teacher in Israel seeks out Jesus. The woman certainly is not seeking out Jesus. She wants to avoid as many people as possible; that is why she comes at midday. Yet both Nicodemus and the woman had needs. Each had those needs illuminated. Each had help offered to make right what was wrong. Let's look briefly at this encounter in chapter four.

**The encounter.** If the opening designation for Jesus in chapter one is Lamb of God, the role which spoke to the sin question, the basic human problem, then here we note Jesus moving in his role to instruct people about and to help them in understanding the purpose of God.

Permeating the entire encounter and the telling of the story is the question of Jesus' identity. What kind of man is this Jew who will speak to a Samaritan woman? Jesus' response: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

The further account then continues to deal with Jesus' person. Who do you think you are? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself? the woman asks. A bit later, when she suddenly sees herself as an open book in this stranger's presence, she calls him a prophet.

In the ensuing conversation, she wonders how he may be related to the Messiah. In fact, when she leaves to return to the city, her question to her fellow citizens implies that she is beginning to believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

Finally, when the people's curiosity has been aroused to go and see for themselves, they come up with a deep and profound conviction: "We know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

As I've pondered this story, I'm led more and more to see that one of the focal points of the story is verse 10: "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." What is this gift? And why have I coupled it with evangelism?

**The nature of the gift.** Some interpreters who make easy associations and comparisons have a ready answer. They say Paul speaks of Christ as God's unspeakable gift; therefore the gift of God here is Christ (Hengstenberg). Or Paul speaks of the gift of God being eternal life through Jesus Christ. So the gift here is eternal life.

Others interpret it a bit differently. This gift must be the "living water," the "life-giving stream of blessedness which Christ is opening in this wilderness." Or the living water welling up like a river in the heart of the believer (as Augustine would have it) is the Holy Spirit.

Now there can be a measure of truth in all of these views, but is that what the writer here had in mind? Note once more the statement "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." The writer here adds the clause "who it is that asks you for a drink" as an explanatory statement which bears on the identity of the gift. The gift of God is that the Son came in human form so to identify with human beings that he could ask this woman to have a need of his met. He had come to identify with beings lacking wholeness—even those utterly despised by the religious establishment—to bring healing to them. That is a gift.

John said it in chapter three: "God so loved . . . that he gave. . . ." God's condescension is so marked that it becomes the occasion for an adequate communication. God desires a re-established fellowship. Someone has said, "The gift of God is the full discovery of personal relations with the veritable Source of all life. This becomes life eternal as it leads to knowledge of the Only God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; and assists a full realization of the life, the Source and end of which are God" (H. R. Reynolds, *Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 17, pp. 164f).

Thus in John's Gospel as in the others, God intends that that divine purpose shall be realized in Jesus' coming.

*continued on next page*

## The gift of God and evangelism
*continued*

Jesus' ministry is the quintessence of God's love—living in the world to such an extent that the Son is given to avert destruction and to offer instead eternal life. And it is trust in this one whose story is that in his passion and in his resurrection he works redemption that leads to eternal life. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing, you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).

It is this conviction which gives redemption to the individual, and which gives the incentive for evangelism. The Germans say it well: "Gerettet sein, gibt Rettersinn." To be redeemed is to give the perspective and motive for telling the story of redemption.

When several years ago seminary and mission board representatives met to ask what it meant to have our total program permeated with a mission perspective, a missional thrust, we actually got quickly to the heart of the very reason for our existence. I mention this because you don't talk about the mission of the church, our mission as an arm of the church, without confronting evangelism. Bob Ramseyer has been telling us in no uncertain terms that we cannot speak of evangelism here and mission or missions over there and not suffer the divided and schizophrenic personality which results.

The Anabaptists are most instructive here. We don't read much in their literature about evangelists. We read a great deal about missioners who were doing evangelism—witnessing to the love and grace of God and declaring themselves willing to suffer and die.

Our recent mission consultation in Strasbourg reminded us again that the growth of our churches in Europe and North America has slowed almost to a standstill; it is the churches in Latin America, Africa and Asia that are growing, despite suffering. Or is it because of their suffering?

The question comes back to the identity of the one whom we profess to follow. The understanding which we have of this Christ will determine our perspective on evangelism and the motive for this involvement.

My concern is that we keep before us the confrontation which we have had with the central character of Scripture. There are many encounters which this Jesus had with those who acknowledged their needs and those who saw it as an affront to think that they had any needs. Our own lives are reflected in these experiences. Here is our encounter for cleansing, healing and inspiration for joining the disciple train.

As we know the gift of God, will we with eager determination put first things first in our lives? As we know the gift of God, with whom will we not want to share our new-found joy? Living water is our gift of life to give.

*Henry Poettcker*

# Reflections after six weeks at seminary

*Doris* and *Rod Weber*

*Wednesday, Aug. 29, 11:30 p.m.* A telephone call is the last activity of our 10-year-long pastorate at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont. We're almost on the road to seminary.

*Thursday, Aug. 30* Left Ontario in the early morning with a loaded car, weary bodies and high expectations. Arriving at Elkhart, Ind., at 1:15 p.m., we immediately find ourselves in an orientation session and registration procedures. We're totally bewildered by too many options. Where do we fit in?

*Friday, Aug. 31, 4 p.m.* Registration completed. Three days of unscheduled relaxation lie ahead. The question is, Can we adjust to nothing that needs doing? Considered being "mattress Mennonites" for one Sunday morning. C. J. Dyck's invitation to Hively squelched the temptation. Wandering around campus, we discovered even at AMBS we can be put into the parent role.

*Tuesday, Sept. 4* Classes begin. Lectures stimulating. Assignment deadlines are far distant. No immediate obligations such as sermons, speeches or committees.

*Tuesday, Sept. 11* Courses in theology, ministry, missions and anthropology open windows of understanding and insights into the larger world. Horizons broaden and perspectives are enlarged.

*Doris Weber*

*Rod Weber*

Devotional Life class is a spiritual oasis of faith journeys, prayerful care for each other and praise to God who is faithful.

*Saturday, Sept. 15* Rod goes to a silent retreat. We both wonder, Can he really be still that long? We also wonder, Is it really Christian to constantly be on the receiving end?

*Monday, Sept. 17* Solved the dilemma. Signed up for a "course" in the campus co-op nursery. Doris comforts, rocks and diapers. Rod on hands and knees keeps the peace. Helps to keep us in touch with reality while freeing young parents for study.

*Saturday, Sept. 22* The dorm apartment feels like home. Just enough room for the two of us. Very little housekeeping to do. Feels like vacation. Familiar noises in the hall: piano, laughing, tall tales and eating. They ease the transition from a busy home life in Ontario. Supper with dorm residents once a week involves us as part of the dorm family.

*Wednesday, Sept. 26* Never dreamed we'd pack so many sack lunches. Noon hour forums and colloquiums combine eating and practical Christianity as it is experienced in Men and Women in Ministry, and mission and peace colloquia.

*Thursday, Oct. 4* Classes divided into small groups, coffee lounge discussions, availability of faculty and staff, all of the AMBS community functioning as the church in our lives in the present. We are impressed with the attempts and results of an educational community functioning as the people of God.

*Tuesday, Oct. 9* Two days until board meeting for Doris (member of the Goshen Biblical Seminary board of overseers). Trying to juggle two roles. Might be good if it were a requirement for all board members to spend one semester on campus. Certainly helps in understanding what the work of the board is all about.

*Monday, Oct. 15* Friendships! Common life experiences are shared. We laugh, pray and cry together. These friends will be a part of us long after we leave. First assignments due. Must get to work. Getting to feel like home again.

*Student Humberto Flores of Bolivia makes music during the all-seminary outing at Camp Friedenswald.*

*Annie and Heidi Schulz (left) of Ontario get acquainted with Sharon Gehman of Pennsylvania.*

## 225 students

Enrollment in fall semester, 1984, is 225, compared to the record 244 a year ago. Enrollments in the various study programs, with 1983 figures in parenthesis, are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Master of Divinity | 142 (153) |
| Master of Arts (Peace Studies) | 13 (9) |
| One Year Theology | 33 (44) |
| Unclassified | 27 (15) |
| Post Graduate | 5 (4) |
| Certificate in Theology | 5 (8) |

Mennonite Biblical Seminary (General Conference Mennonite Church) has 91 students enrolled, 64 men and 27 women.

Goshen Biblical Seminary (Mennonite Church) has 134 students enrolled, 82 men and 52 women.

With both schools combined, 155 students are enrolled in full-time study (nine hours and above). The full-time equivalent of part-time students is 27, making a full-time equivalent enrollment of 182, compared to 191.1 for the same period last year.

## Send your pastor

Jan. 28-Feb. 1, 1985
Annual Pastors' Workshop on campus
Theme: "Evangelism in the Congregation"
Nineteen resource people will address the theme in sermons, lectures and workshops.

George Hunter, dean and professor of evangelization and church strategy at Asbury Theological Seminary's School of Evangelism and World Mission, is one of the major resource people. His best-known book is *The Contagious Congregation*, (Abingdon, 1979).

Also speaking will be Mary Cosby of the ministerial staff of the Church of the Saviour, Washington. A nationally recognized speaker on evangelism, her topic will be "The Holy Spirit and Evangelism."

Program and registration ($35 for pastor, $20 for spouse) forms available from Mary Troyer, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, telephone (219) 295-3726.

## Cover a seminary course in three weeks at the January interterm

Interterm, Jan. 7-25, 1985

Seven on-campus courses—*Psalms: Worship and Wisdom* by Marilyn Kern, *Gospel of Mark* by Willard M. Swartley, *Teaching Ministry of the Church* by Daniel Schipani and A. Don Augsburger and others, *Strategy of Mission* by Sheldon Sawatsky, *United Methodist History* by James J. Jones, *Anabaptist History and Theology* by C.J. Dyck, and *Conflict, Communication and Conciliation* by Ron Kraybill.

People may enroll for one course for three hours credit ($270 tuition) or audit ($135). For application and course outlines you may contact James Metzler, AMBS, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517, or call him at (219) 295-3726.

# An introduction to the Mission Training Center

The Mission Training Center symbolizes the fact that participation in Christ's mission around the globe is a commitment of the whole church and that preparation for that mission utilizes the resources of the entire church. More than a decade ago the Commission on Overseas Mission (General Conference Mennonite Church), the Mennonite Board of Missions (Mennonite Church) and the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries together set up the Mission Training Center on the seminary campus at Elkhart to work at the special kind of preparation which is necessary for mission. The Mission Training Center is part of the seminary community, and the training is done together with seminary students preparing for other kinds of ministry. However, the Mission Training Center functions to give special guidance in planning a course of study and training to prepare people for their specific assignments in mission.

*This year in both formal classes and in the mission colloquium there is a significant number of students who are preparing for North American pastoral roles. Their concern is to learn from churches in other parts of the world, especially about their mission in society, to more intelligently and diligently support such efforts, and to see how this support is vital for the health of the North American church.*

*From left: Rich Meyer of Indiana, Luke and Jesse Miller, and Carl Meyer replace a fallen brick. Luke and Jesse are twin sons of Mark and Debbie Miller of Illinois.*

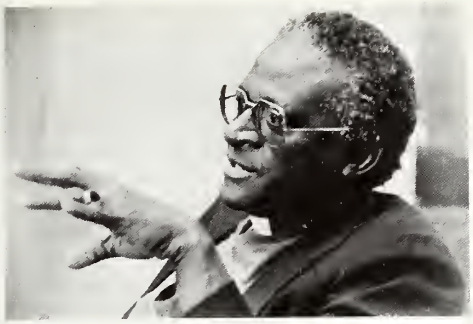
Although most of the training is done on the Elkhart campus, this is not an ivory tower study which is only marginally related to the real world. The center's relationship to the mission boards brings insight into the real world in which we work in God's mission. Many experienced missionaries come back to the center for further preparation, bringing with them a wealth of recent experience in mission which they can share with people preparing for their first terms of service. At the same time, the sharing of experiences from all over the world enriches everyone and gives new ideas for creative ministry in the places to which they are called.

The basis for our training in mission lies in our understanding of and commitment to the Lord who commissions us for mission. We understand Jesus Christ to be not only the source of the good news which we share in mission but also the model for the way in which we work in mission.

Ministry modeled on Jesus Christ means doing mission as a servant. Jesus Christ emptied himself and came into the world at the bottom of the human social ladder in order to share God's love and the good news of the kingdom with women and men. We believe that in order to be missionaries today we need to become servants as Jesus was. No one finds becoming a genuine servant easy. Training for mission is training for being a servant, for being a servant in the specific place in which the missionary is called to live and work. Such training must go far beyond merely learning techniques for communication in cross-cultural situations, as important as such training may be. Servant ministry in today's world demands preparation in understanding the way of Christ, the good news which is personified in Jesus Christ, the gospel which we are committed to sharing in mission. Servant ministry demands preparation in understanding the people with whom we want to share the gospel. We need to understand how to become servants on their terms, not on our terms. In order to share with people we need to learn to stand where they stand and to begin to see the world through their eyes. Servant ministry demands preparation in understanding ourselves. Without a willingness to face ourselves and acknowledge our strengths and our weaknesses, we are not able to see who we may become through Jesus Christ. With self-awareness we may become in Jesus Christ servants in mission. Without that self-understanding we are likely to become self-protective people, playing a servant's role and thinking that we are servants, but being seen by those around us as arrogant, oppressive people. Preparation for mission can help us to break out of the molds with which we have surrounded ourselves so that we can be remolded as servants by the one who has called us to his service.

Today the ministries of those who have devoted significant periods of time to preparation for mission testify to the fact that it is indeed possible to take Jesus Christ as our model, to follow him in mission and to share the good news of our God's love in cities and in the countryside, in rich and poor countries, in situations of oppression and in relative freedom, in every conceivable setting on the face of our planet. *Robert L. Ramseyer, director of Mission Training Center, professor of missions and anthropology.*

*Robert Ramseyer*



**South African Anglican bishop** Desmond Tutu (left) has been named winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, it was learned on Oct. 16. Tutu, currently head of the South African Council of Churches, has been a consistent critic of his government and especially of its policy of apartheid. He was picked for the prestigious prize in honor of his efforts to seek a peaceful resolution of the bitter racial tensions that divide his troubled nation.

**"Despite the Equal Pay Act** of 1963, which required identical salaries for men and women doing the same work, it's still a man's world as far as paychecks are concerned," Knight-Ridder News Service reported recently. "(American) women in 1982 earned only 63 cents for each dollar paid to men—only a four-cent increase over 1974's figure."

# Mennonites and Quakers object to military taxes

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—One year ago in September the General Conference Mennonite Church, acting on a resolution adopted at its 1983 delegate sessions, began not withholding federal income taxes from the paychecks of the seven of its employees requesting that. (The number is now five, with some changes in personnel.)

"Conscientious objection to military taxes is being dealt with in several religious organizations," says Robert Hull, General Conference Mennonite staff member and himself an objector.

Predating the Mennonite decision of 1983, in November 1982 the Friends World Committee for Consultation (a parallel structure to the Mennonite World Conference) agreed to not withhold federal income tax from the paychecks of several employees making that request. Most Friends (Quaker) yearly meetings now have similar requests before them.

Hull represented Mennonites at the meeting of a peace coalition (named New Call to Peacemaking) Oct. 19 in Philadelphia.

Employees conscientiously objecting to military taxes have state and social security taxes deducted but are treated like self-employed people as far as federal income taxes are concerned. They submit quarterly estimated tax payments to the IRS. The Mennonite employees have made a portion of those quarterly payments but put the balance—the amount they feel they cannot voluntarily pay because of U.S. military spending—into a special account at General Conference's central offices.

Correspondence from Mennonite officials to the IRS has kept the matter "completely open and above board," said Ted W. Stuckey, conference treasurer.

## Hispanic ministries grows in each district

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—"The Lord has blessed Hispanic ministries in every district," says Alberto Quintela, consultant for the General Conference Mennonite Church. "Everywhere I go, new Hispanic leaders are eager for Anabaptist training." Churches and conferences are asking how they can participate in this new challenge in North America. Many, like the Northern District Mennonite Men who in 1984 allocated a $700 Hispanic Pastoral Scholarship, are responding to the stewardship needs of this expanding ministry.

In the light of this, "Praise '84" was the theme of meetings of the Hispanic ministries reference council, held in Newton Oct. 8-9. Blessings of the past year include the following: New York's Cuerpo De Cristo Church has installed its new pastor, Luis Ademos. The Northern District has retained Helen Quintela as a church planter in St. Paul, Minn. Eastern District began a new Hispanic outreach in Allentown, Pa., with Artemio de Jesus as church planter. Rapid Hispanic church growth is taking place in Dallas, Lansdale, Pa., and Chicago.

Four students are enrolled in the Hispanic education fund: Manuel Baez of Texas and Roy Jimenez of Illinois in the Goshen (Ind.) College Hispanic ministries leadership training program, and Marco Guete and Miguel Espindola of Chicago at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Hispanic ministries reference council is composed of district representatives Betty Hochstetler, Central, Rafael Peralta, Eastern, Ernest Miller, Northern, Alan Whaley, Pacific, David Habegger, Western, and Milton Harder, representative of the Commission on Home Ministries.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**Evangelist Billy Graham** preached to 11 million people in a single evangelistic meeting on Aug. 19, when 1 million gathered in Seoul, Korea, and 10 million more viewed the service on nationwide television in a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Protestant church in Korea. Graham had just completed an extensive, three-month, six-city preaching mission in England.

**The missions and evangelism committee** of the Conference of Mennonites in Manitoba is encouraging listeners in southern Manitoba to listen to the regular Faith and Life Communications programs on radio CFAM at 1 p.m. on Nov. 18 and 25. Producer Vic Sawatzky will interview two committee members, John Zacharias and John Wiebe, about the committee's vision for church growth through church planting. They also solicit responses to the broadcasts. Write to the CMM office, 202-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C9, or phone (204) 475-3550.

**Two young ex-guerrillas** from El Salvador "have been brutally assassinated in separate incidents shortly after making commitments to Jesus Christ," according to Open Doors News Service, Orange, Calif. Although the cases seem unrelated, both Monchini Sanchez and Juan Carlos Mejivares had refused to denounce their newfound faith following persistent threats to their lives. Both were eliminated in carefully planned ambushes before witnesses and friends.

# WORKERS

*Quinn*

*D. Sell*

*E. Wiens*

*L. Wiens*

*J. Sell*

*Starbuck*

*Wibby*

*Zendt*

*Teresa Miller* began a two-year Mennonite Voluntary Service term in September as a worker in the Community Day-Care Center in Markham, Ill. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Steubenville, Ohio. Her parents are John and Carol Miller of Tempe, Ariz.

*Debra Mytych*, St. Peter and Paul Church, Detroit, was assigned in September by MVS for one year as a social worker with the LakeView Presbyterian Church, Chicago. She has a bachelor's degree from Mercy College in Detroit. Her mother is Genevieve Mytych.

*Jon Nafziger*, Bethel Church, Wadsworth, Ohio, began a two-year MVS assignment in September as Central America refugee coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee/Central American Refugee Coalition in Denver. He has a bachelor's degree from Goshen (Ind.) College. His parents are Myrl and Twila Nafziger of Wadsworth.

*Bob Quinn*, Westview United Church, Yorkton, Sask., has been assigned by MVS as a youth worker for The Shelter in Seattle. This one-year term began in August. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon. His parents are Harvey and Doris Quinn of Yorkton.

*Catherine Ratmeyer*, First Church, Reedley, Calif., began a one-year MVS term in September as a church worker in the Bacavi (Ariz.) Mennonite Church. She has a bachelor's degree from Hope College, Holland, Mich. Her parents are Cornelius and Jenny Hibma of Escalon, Calif.

*Chris Rempel*, Osler (Sask.) Church, was assigned for one year by MVS as a worker in the Friendship Day-Care Centers, Hutchinson, Kan. Her term began in August. Her parents are Jim and Frieda Rempel of Osler.

*David* and *Jane Sell*, Moencopi (Ariz.) Fellowship, began two-year MVS terms in July in church and community work in Tuba City, Ariz. He has a bachelor's degree from Wichita (Kan.) State University. His parents are Albert and Reba Jansen of Hutchinson, Kan. Hers are Abe and Lydia Nickel of Medora, Kan.

*Steve Shenk*, Prairie Street Church, Elkhart, Ind., has been named managing editor of *Gospel Herald* in Scottdale, Pa. He began this position on Oct. 8.

*Lisa Starbuck*, Trinity Episcopal Church, Greeley, Colo., began a two-year MVS term in August as a teacher in the Hopi Mission School, Kykotsmovi, Ariz. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley. Her parents are Lawrence and Mary Ann Starbuck.

*Eugene Thieszen*, Bethesda Church, Henderson, Neb., has been assigned by MCC to Gaborone, Botswana, where he will be working as a pilot and mechanic.

*Louise Wibby*, Salvation Army, Middletown, Conn., began a two-year MVS term in April as an assistant manager of program services in the Olin Apartments, a hotel for senior citizens in Denver. She has a degree from Middlesex Community College in Middletown.

*Debbie Wiebe*, Superb Church, Kerrobert, Sask., was assigned by MVS to a one-year term as a worker in the Friendship Day-Care Centers, Hutchinson, Kan. She began in August. Her parents

**Operation Home Free** is a new program to aid reuniting runaway children with their families. Sponsored by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Trailways Corporation, any children identified by the IACP as runaways will be given free transport aboard Trailways buses to their home communities. According to IACP statistics, over 1 million children are reported missing each year. Of this number, many are runaways who find themselves stranded in unfamiliar locales with no way to return home to their families.

**About 70 Christian communities** gathered on the campus of Hope College in Holland, Mich., July 23-28. Planned by representatives of eight U.S. communities who have formed a network called Community of Communities, the event brought almost 600 people, 200 of whom were children and teenagers. The organizers had planned for events in which the gathered Christian communities could inspire and strengthen each other, share resources, teach each other and together discern both the times and God's movement in the world today.

**The gap in rates of infant mortality** between black and white children in the United States has widened over the past five years, reports the Food Research and Action Center, Washington. "In the past five years, almost 20,000 black infants died during the first year of their life who would not have died if their chances were equal to (those) of white infants," commented Arthur Hoyte of the School of Medicine at Georgetown University.

# RECORD

are John and Marie Wiebe of Kerrobert.

*Barbara Zendt*, Zion Church, Souderton, Pa., began a two-year MVS term in March as a dental assistant in a Dallas, Texas, office that provides care for low-income people. She has a bachelor's degree from Millersville (Pa.) State College. Her parents are Thomas and Betty Zendt of Souderton.

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**Qualifications:** A strong commitment to the work of MCC, a thorough understanding of and commitment to the Anabaptist/Mennonite peace position, oral communication skills and writing ability, ability to supervise and motivate others.

Position available on salaried or volunteer basis.

**Application deadline: Dec. 31**
*Apply c/o Dave Ringer, MCC Canada Personnel Services.*

## Nurse needed

Committed Christian RN with **midwifery and administrative skills** required for the medical center located in the Blue Creek Mennonite Colony in Belize. Must be able to speak English, Spanish and German. Duties to commence **February 1985.**

For further information contact:
EMMC Mission Office
Box 2128
Winkler, MB R0A 2X0
(204) 325-7006.

**The German Mennonite Peace Committee** recently sent word of its plans to celebrate and strengthen bonds among Mennonite congregations internationally as a natural sequel to last October's Trans-Atlantic Peace Sunday and Mennonite World Conference. Last October's celebration gave encouragement to German Mennonite congregations as they became aware that there are North Americans who are concerned about U.S. foreign policy and are willing to take steps to counter it. This year's celebrations gave occasion to enhance awareness and bonding internationally.


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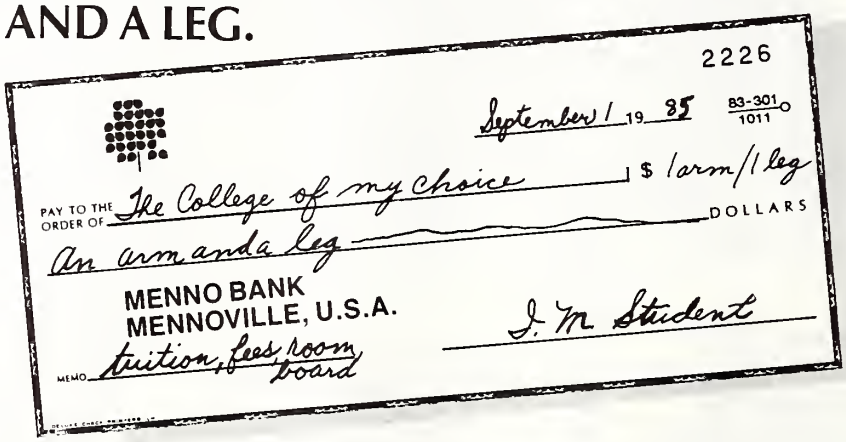


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Suggestions for sharing with God's family this Thanksgiving and Christmas season:

# Share

> MCC hopes to gather 50,000 school kits for Laotian children this winter. Write to MCC for a list of kit contents.

> The Zaire Mennonite community is holding a retreat to train young people to lead Bible studies. $500 is needed for materials, food and transportation.

> MCC U.S. provides non-military employment training for urban youth. $2,400 provides vocational training for one minority youth. $200 covers a youth's expenses for one month.

> Fighting in Nicaragua is creating food needs. $15 sends a 100-pound bag of beans to be distributed by church workers. 15¢ buys one pound of beans.

> "Kids on the Block" is a troupe of puppets used to raise awareness of disabled people. An MCCer coordinates the project. $600 supports the program for a month; $20 for a day.

> With new hives, bee farmers in South Lebanon can double or triple honey production. $18 buys one hive.

> MCCers in Kentucky repair homes so they are warm, safe and dry. $300 insulates one house; $150 puts on a new roof; $50 weatherizes one home.

> MCC provides supplementary rations for "street kids" and women in prison in Ouagdougou, Burkina Faso (Upper Volta). MCCers plan literacy and other classes. $20 per month pays food and transportation for this program.

> Because of Bolivia's teacher shortage, educators train local people to teach school. Parents pay part of the teacher's salaries. MCC contributes $25 for each teacher per month.

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Mennonite Central Committee Canada
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MCC Central States
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2206 Speers Avenue, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5X7

# The Pope came to Canada

*Bernie Wiebe*

Karol Wojtyla, now Pope John Paul II, visited Canada Sept. 9-20. It was inevitable that his globe-trotting eventually had to include our country, where over 40 percent of the population is Roman Catholic. This shepherd from Poland came to visit his flock. And while Canada's Catholics met him in large numbers and generally with enthusiasm, even John Paul II was surprised at the courteous reception by the rest of Canada.

John Paul II is an unusual man. His personal warmth and his faith disarmed most people who fear the Catholic church. That is not an easy task. Canada is a multicultural mosaic both generally and in its churches. There are those, like us Mennonites, who remember dark pages of history where Catholics gladly killed Anabaptists. And we recall that the Reformation had to come because the Bible was being withheld from the people, salvation had been turned into a series of rituals and the church was little more than a massive herd of sheep blindly following leaders who had become ensconced in a realm apart from the needs of the flock. Emotions from the scars of centuries heal slowly.

Ever since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) the Roman Catholic church has been changing. Mass is celebrated in the local language. Interdenominational Bible study groups often include a high percentage of Catholics who are the most aggressive students in the groups. More authority rests at the community level. Protestants are considered "separated brethren and sisters" instead of "heretics." Homilies today are part of many Catholic services.

The contrast for me was most obvious from my first attendance at a Catholic wedding. I understood only the occasional name, otherwise not a word. At a recent Catholic wedding, I understood every word that was said.

John Paul II preached, sometimes in the angry tone of an Old Testament prophet (e.g. at Edmonton), on themes important to all Christians. Protestants found him intriguing. The most conservative evangelicals were glad to hear the Pope speak strongly against abortion and against loose marriage vows. More liberal evangelicals and other Protestants endorsed his strong pleas to put people ahead of technology and to work for justice to the aged, to the handicapped and to minority groups. Lines became blurred and hearts united as he spoke of Christ's compassion for the poor and called all believers to share Christ's love with the underprivileged in developing nations. His language often sounded totally familiar to Protestants.

*Pope John Paul II (center left in chair) holds an audience in St. Peter's square filled with tourists to Rome last July. The author was among this group.*

Of course, differences are still there. Not many Protestants can understand the need for all the uniforms, all the gadgetry and all the motions of even a fairly simple mass, not to mention a high mass. And we still feel too much power vested in a Pope, too much mystique draped upon Mary, too little concrete daily-life discipleship in the proclamation and theology, and too much a mixture of commercial/political showmanship with spiritual pilgrimage.

But John Paul II does not hesitate to speak of conversion and being humble servants of Christ. And he challenged *all* believers to follow Jesus Christ.

Upon both Catholics and Protestants John Paul II's visit to Canada left a deep impression. Attitudes toward Catholics are being reviewed. One hears a greater readiness to recognize the Holy Spirit at work there also.

There is encouragement here for us. God's Spirit does not recognize our human boxes and boundaries. He moves wherever people respond. Renewal today is happening across all denominational delineations. And wherever God's Spirit works, we believers should rejoice and support. Wherever people act contrary to the Spirit, we must witness of his filling and abundant grace.


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# LETTERS

## A gift for guidance

I am a Filipino independent, evangelical pastor of a small church. Since 1963 I have been pastoring small churches, whose theology and destiny have become my interest, if not my obsession.

My concern at the moment is the integration into wholeness of my faith and ministry. This is my third pastorate and our congregation is struggling to find an alternative between extreme liberalism on the one hand and fundamentalism on the other. The task of restructuring not only our beliefs but also our church structure is our pressing concern. And I need guidance. I hope the Mennonite church can provide us (me) with some viable perspectives—in church and ministry. I am aware that even your denomination has its own variants, but somehow you are able to chart a course for your constituents. Our primary task (among the fragmented independent churches here) is to seek ways and means to unite ourselves toward common beliefs and commitments in this country.

Out of the above concerns springs my intention to request from you a gift subscription to *The Mennonite*. I hope to be able to gather some information and perspectives which can help me in my quest. *Benjamin G. Dayrit, Dasmarinas, Cavite 2708, Philippines*

Sept. 6

*Editor's note: This is just one sample of the requests that come for gift subscriptions. How could we turn him down?*

*If you'd like to help support such gifts, we'd welcome a special donation. Currently we give out about 100 such gifts each year in the faith that extra gifts will cover them. To date that has happened each year.*

## Freedom of choice

September is the most poignant time of the year for me. Six years ago my baby was due in September, but I rejected my Creator's plan for my baby and had him aborted. This was done in preference to taking on the inconvenience of another child.

I have constantly begged for God's forgiveness and I feel sure he has forgiven me. But my problem is I can't forgive myself.

Time has failed to dispel the thought of what might have been. I see new babies being welcomed everywhere. At times they even smile at me, and the remorse I feel destroys my peace of mind. My poor baby will never smile at me nor laugh and play with other children. Instead he mingles in an unknown place, among the bones or ashes of dogs, cats or other aborted babies.

The memory of having willingly permitted such an atrocity counteracts every pleasant thought that enters my mind. I find it almost impossible to cope with my sorrow.

I have a selfish motive for writing this message. It relieves my despondency slightly to anticipate that maybe someone will read it, take heed and thereby be spared the sense of guilt that has haunted me the past six years. *Noreen Case, 839 Law St., San Diego, CA 92109*

Sept. 20

## The children and the ink

I am wondering about the Bible passages as a commentary on child abuse (Sept. 11 issue). Those repeated passages about God punishing until the third generation and always omitting the part that he is gracious to thousands. Also, there are many passages which say that God does not punish the children for the sins of the fathers. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Or is he trying to say we human beings act as though that is what God is saying?

One question to the staff: Why is the print often so dim? Is it more expensive to make it blacker, or is it more beautiful this way? For old eyes the blacker the nicer. *Marie J. Janzen, 217 Muse #104, Newton, KS 67114*

Sept. 25

*Assistant editor's note: Apparently, the problem is not the inking but the typeface we use. Making the print bolder requires a different typeface.*

## Thanks for cover

What a marvelous cover on the Sept. 11 issue of *The Mennonite*! Thanks also to Alfred Siemens for designing this cover. I have cut it out and placed it on our refrigerator for all of our family and friends to enjoy. *Elaine Lowenberg Harper, 180 Arlington Ave., (Kensington) Berkeley, CA 94707*

Sept. 25

## Good view of world

Ronald Rich's article, "Let's Love All Who Suffer" (Sept. 25 issue) is greatly appreciated by our family for its balance and clear-eyed view of the world. An intelligent faith should be able to see the complexities which make judgment more difficult and yet be able to trust the Holy Spirit to clarify issues so that action can be taken. Rich exhorts us to accept the three-dimensional picture as we make our evaluations. *Mel and Mary Gerber, Route 1, Box 156, Versailles, MO 65084*

Oct. 4

## Thoughts on communism

Ronald Rich's article (Sept. 25 issue) is thoughtful and perceptive. There has been perhaps more wishful thinking published in the past than hard, elusive truth.

It would be reductio ad absurdum to argue that all Americans are good and all Russians are evil. It would also take extreme tunnel-vision to claim that it would be no worse living under communism than under capitalism per se. I would commend to those dubious on this point to read the writings of the communists themselves. If the 12 available volumes of Lenin seem too heavy, then perhaps the *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism (Manual)*.

I have known many indigenous communists, some highly intelligent, many often charming, almost all enthusiastically dedicated to using whatever means are available—particularly innocent third parties and church or peace groups—to help promote the abolition of our political system and the inauguration of their own. To say there is no basic difference between their attitudes or standards and your own is to demean the Christian ethos. A local Mennonite minister asked me once whether the FBI had ever asked me to kill anyone (while working with them inside the CPUSA). Of course they had not.

But there were several Communist Party members who admitted casual murders during the Depression years, and one tried to add me to his score in 1968. They simply do not view things as you do, nor are they bound by your "superstitious bourgeois standards." I think Ron points this out well.

I submit for your consideration the thought that, from a historical perspective, if the Mennonite heritage means anything at all, the excresence of communist attitudes or practices would be a devaluation and not an enrichment of that heritage. *Norman R. Berkshire, 443 Village Lane, Elkhart, IN 46517*

Oct. 9

# Beatrice farmers serve faithfully

*Donavin Diller*

A Beatrice, Neb., farm boy carries a bucket of milk over to the calf pens on his father's farm. One of the calves is the offspring of an Agri-Urban cow in his father's herd. The calf comes running as it sees Tim coming with the milk bucket. Tim pets the calf's head as it greedily drinks from the large nipple at the bottom of the bucket. Tim wonders if their heifer calf will become another Agri-Urban cow in his father's herd or if the calf will be sold and the money go into the Agri-Urban fund. Whatever happens, Tim knows he has had a part in the work of his church.

Agri-Urban is a non-profit corporation, incorporated under the laws of the state of Kansas by the Mennonite Men's organization of the Western District Conference. It is sponsored by three groups: Western District Conference, Bethel College and the General Conference Mennonite Church. In 1971, when the program was started, investors would loan Agri-Urban money interest free. With that money cattle were purchased and placed in various farmers' feedlots. The farmers donated labor and feed. The earnings were contributions from the farmers to one of the three sponsors. However, other non-profit Mennonite charitable organizations and institutions were also eligible for contributions if the farmers wished to designate profits to them.

Mennonite Agri-Urban is a channel through which both rural and urban people can jointly utilize their financial resources, talents and facilities.

In 1974 Wesley Kroeker came to Beatrice and spoke to the Men's Brotherhood of First Mennonite Church. Kroeker, of Enid, Okla., is credited with the idea of Agri-Urban. The men decided they wanted to get involved with Agri-Urban, but because the majority of the men were dairymen, a tailor-made program was designed by the project committee and Louis Goossen. The men of Beatrice Mennonite Church were invited to join the program, and Donald Claassen was chosen to be the representative to the Kansas Agri-Urban board.

In 1974 the Agri-Urban committee in Kansas loaned $8,700 to the Beatrice Agri-Urban program. Management and organization was left up to the Beatrice men. A yearly report was to be sent to Kansas showing a yearly balance of funds and animals, along with a check for contributions or earnings and a list where the contributions were to go.

*A program like Agri-Urban is another way to give more people an opportunity to express their faith in concrete ways. It can prove to be a great personal blessing for those who share in it.*

Since dairying involves considerable labor, the Beatrice group decided that the dairy farmers subtract the feed cost from the milk income and give the difference as their contribution.

The tailor-made program now also includes farrowing sows and the production of feeder pigs—raising and feeding hogs for market—pasturing feeder cattle and feeding them for market. Members of the program help take care of pasture fences, feed calves, donate feed and donate pasture in addition to the regular projects.

Don Jantzen has served as secretary of the local organization. He places animals, manages the money flow, collects contributions and mails them to Kansas at the end of the year for distribution.

The total contributions of the Beatrice Agri-Urban since 1974 amount to $136,254. The majority of the contributions went to Bethel College, General Conference, Western District Conference, Mennonite Biblical Seminary, First Mennonite Church and Beatrice Day Care—which is operated by the two local Mennonite churches. Lesser amounts were given to MCC, Beatrice Mennonite Church, Goshen College and Beatrice Community Hospital.

This tailor-made Agri-Urban program has created a feeling of self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment on the part of many of the members. Whole families are involved in the projects. This means children can feel that they are a meaningful part of church work. Overall church giving has increased significantly since the Agri-Urban program started. It has also provided a way for talents and abilities to be used in a concrete and visible program. At the end of 1983 the local Agri-Urban owned 29 head of livestock on members' farms plus $6,128 to invest in new projects.

*Donavin Diller, 511 N. 16th Street, Beatrice, NE 68310, is the pastor of First Mennonite Church. In sharing this article with* The Mennonite, *pastor Diller says, "I feel proud for what our farmers have done."*

# Letter from Nicaragua

*Gerald Schlabach* and *Joetta Handrich*

Perhaps you are concerned about reports of serious conflict between sectors of the church and the government in Nicaragua. As church-related workers here we are not only concerned but grieved because we have Christian friends and colleagues who are divided among themselves about how to relate to their government. But what especially grieves us is how some external interests are confusing this conflict with persecution as a pretext to destabilize Nicaragua.

We have come to Nicaragua to work alongside Nicaraguan Christians as they spread the gospel of Christ and extend the kingdom of God. Wanting them to be faithful in the face of new challenges, we also hope our fellow North American Christians will interpret faithfully the events that shape the life of the church for their brothers and sisters in Nicaragua.

The Reagan administration and several private organizations in the United States are making repeated accusations of state-supported religious persecution in Nicaragua. Any definition of religious persecution would include the following activities practiced on a systematic basis: harassment and threats because of one's religious faith; anti-religious propaganda; prohibition of religious services and processions; closing of churches and denial of permission to build churches; disruption of religious services; discrimination and ridicule in public schools; restrictions on private church schools and theological seminaries; restrictions on religious literature, Bibles or radio programs; exclusion from public office and from the professions; and of course violence through arrest, torture and forced labor of church members because of their religion.

We have personal contacts with Christians in many parts of Nicaragua, including close ties with Moravian church leaders from the problematic east coast. We can say firmly that we have not witnessed any of the forementioned elements in a repeated manner that would indicate a governmental policy of persecution. We are aware of some abuses, but they are generally the actions of local officials overstepping their authority. We view such actions as lamentable but not entirely surprising in a Third World society undergoing drastic social change where power is shared among people with little experience in exercising such.

Our conviction is that at a policy level the Nicaraguan government remains committed to protecting religious freedom, inviting Christian participation in the still immense task of national reconstruction and development, and maintaining a separation between church and state.

Both Catholic and Protestant churches have grown in significant ways during the past five years. For example, Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches have doubled in size. Walking through almost any Managua neighborhood or rural town on any evening, one is sure to pass a small church with its doors and windows wide open, the singing, clapping and spirited preaching floating out to the entire neighborhood. Nicaraguan Christians such as our colleagues in CEPAD, the Protestant Committee for Aid to Development, freely minister to physical and spiritual needs throughout the country, especially in rural villages.

Because of the lack of dollars for foreign exchange, Christian literature, like many other imported products, is in short supply. Nevertheless, Christian bookstores report no exceptional problems in bringing Christian literature through customs. The Nicaraguan Bible Society reports that since the triumph of the revolution Bible distribution has grown considerably. Between 1971-79 the society distributed 10,000 - 15,000 New Testaments annually. In 1984 the society expects to distribute 75,000 Bibles and 50,000 New Testaments.

Education in private religious schools is a longstanding tradition in Latin America, especially for the Catholic church. Nicaragua currently has 173 church-run schools, of which 152 are Catholic. Poor families are now able to choose a private religious education for their children because the Ministry of Education has assumed salary and maintenance costs, allowing these private church-run schools to become coeducational, tuition-free and open to the public.

While we rejoice at the vitality of the Nicaraguan churches, we know all too well that there are serious theological differences within both the Catholic and Protestant churches as well as ongoing confrontations between some sectors of the church—principally the Catholic hierarchy—and the government. We believe these confrontations and internal differences grow out of the rapid social change occurring in Nicaragua. The great task of creating a new and just society for the poor challenges all former structures and institutions, including the churches. To make such an ambitious change requires new structures of power and resource control. For some this requires relinquishing former privileges.

In many cases we have seen conflict dealt with positively through dialogue. Protestants have had fruitful, ongoing dialogue with the government since 1982. Most of the 10 Catholic bishops have worked out problems in their regions and carved out roles of constructive critics toward the government. Confrontation, on the other hand, like that which resulted in the July 3 government expulsion of 10 foreign priests, comes from a lack of dialogue. While we lament this action and with other U.S. church workers have protested to the government, it is no coincidence that this action occurred in a showdown with Archbishop Obando y Bravo, the one bishop who has assumed a posture of open confrontation.

We are convinced that many of those in the United States who charge the Nicaraguan government with religious persecution are not acting out of sincere concern for the church but to rally political support for a policy to overthrow the present Nicaraguan government. Not only is this policy a major cause of hardship and death for our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters, it is manipulation of religion. To respond to our legitimate concerns about church-state problems in Nicaragua by confusing tensions and political confrontation with persecution is to add to the division in church and society rather than to healing. You may be too far away to help heal Nicaragua's divisions. But please help keep the U.S. government from further opening the wound.

*Gerald Schlabach and Joetta Handrich serve under Mennonite Central Committee in Nicaragua.*

# books

## Caring for pastors

**The Pastor's Exit** *by Menno H. Epp (CMBC Publications, 1984, 117 pages)*

*Reviewed by Jake Friesen, director of ministerial leadership services, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*

The issue is the call and care of pastors. In two decades, Canadian congregations moved from pastoral leadership largely chosen from among the members of a congregation to leadership called from outside for candidates trained and available. This has left an unfortunate absence of uniform guidelines, procedures and standards for assisting congregations moving through leadership changes.

In the foreword Glen Horst states, "Throughout the centuries pastors have been charged with the responsibility of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling those entrusted to their care. Recently there has been a new awareness that the one who gives care also needs care."

The purpose of this book is to create awareness in the churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada of a hurtful practice. Epp has interviewed and analyzed the experiences of 40 pastors and their families that have been involuntarily terminated. This forms the longest chapter in the book and provides the facts as well as emotional energy for Epp's observations and proposals.

The reasons Epp sees for involuntary termination are length of tenure, professional incompetence, interpersonal incompetence, congregational factions, value/goal conflict between pastor and congregation, loss of trust and respect for the leader. What happens to people, the church, the pastor, the spouse and the family is dealt with. Members of the pastor's family, including the children, are often most directly affected and sometimes irreparably hurt.

Congregations are not totally at fault. Pastors sometimes set the stage for their demise by not sharing leadership and power. The flow of authority and power in congregational polity among Mennonites is often confused.

Epp offers the following agenda for the church: (1) see the church as a partnership in ministry, (2) train toward a more intentional and confrontive approach with both people and issues that hinder shalom, (3) follow the rule of Christ (Matthew 18:15-20), (4) accept the reality of pastor and people as earthen vessels, (5) state clearly the purpose and process of evaluation/review for congregation and leadership, (6) strive for personal faith and competency undergirded with a sense of divine presence as the model of ministry, (7) re-examine congregational autonomy and conference authority as they relate to decisions about leadership, (8) seek consensus rather than use the vote and the secret ballot, (9) strive for long-term commitment and termination only after in-depth examination and resolution indicates that termination would be in the interest of all concerned.

*The Pastor's Exit* is a timely study of a specific issue. This study has opened dialogue that is urgently needed to reshape the church's life and faith.

## Standing alone

**Meditations for the Suddenly Single** *by Ragan Courtney (Zondervan, 1983, 121 pages)*

*Reviewed by Martha F. Graber, director of the Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114*

Who are the suddenly single? These 53 brief devotional messages recognize many kinds of isolation and loneliness besides those of the person bereft by death or divorce. Brief phrases from the Psalms introduce the thoughts and experiences at times of feeling alone. There are the moments of deep grief, of despair or depression or alienation from a loved one. But there are also the times of exhaltation, of creativity, of experiencing the birth of a child.

How does one express the loneliness of the derelict, the prisoner, the prostitute or the alcoholic? What are the feelings of the person who has experienced an abortion? Is one alone at times of anger or of disobedience? Who can help us when we experience the recurring nightmare or when the child we love suffers from a fever we cannot relieve?

Can we share the lonely courage of the terminally ill? Or the prayers of thanksgiving of a dying mother? Can we rejoice in our sufferings? Our fears? Are we alone at the inception of new ideas? In the discovery of truth?

All of these and more are included in these meditations and brief poetic prayers which help us face times of aloneness that come into our lives by choice or circumstance and in which we may choose our reaction of love, of understanding or of acceptance of the gift of life which can turn mourning into dancing.

Perhaps another title would have more aptly expressed the breadth of these meditations for those times in our lives when we must stand alone.

# film

## Hope out of despair

**Places in the Heart**, *a Tri-Star film written and directed by Robert Benton*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, assistant editor*

In one of the more religious movies you'll see this season, Robert Benton has crafted a story from the Depression years in his hometown of Waxahachie, Texas. The man who brought us *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Kramer vs. Kramer* now brings us *Places in the Heart*, a film full of grace yet shirking sentimentality.

Edna Spalding (Sally Field) is widowed in an absurd shooting accident and must face hard times with her two young children. The local banker comes to tell her she owes money on a loan her husband had taken. She takes in a black sharecropper named Moze (Danny Glover) to help her save her land by planting cotton. The banker forces her to take in his blind brother-in-law Will (John Malkovich) as a boarder. A makeshift family is forged as these three characters, each marked by some deprivation, fight together to survive.

A parallel conflict is played out between Edna's sister, Margaret (Lindsay Crouse), and her husband, Wayne (Ed Harris), who has an affair with Margaret's best friend, Viola (Amy Madigan).

These dramas occur in an authentic 1930s setting filled with evocative details. A delicate spirit pervades the film, which is framed with scenes of families saying grace at the dinner table and sharing communion in church. The final scene is a startling picture of God's kingdom on earth.

# MEDITATION

## We are God's family

*This is an edited version of a meditation written by Stephen Monyatsi, a pastor of an independent church in Lesotho. He is a co-teacher with AIMM missionaries Harlan and Claire de Brun.*

"As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." After my parents believed and received Jesus Christ, they said to themselves, We too shall serve the Lord together with our families. Through that same hope we, their children, are God's property, the property given to him by our parents, just like the father of the believers (Abraham) gave his only son, Isaac, as his sacrifice to God, showing that everything he had belonged to God. My parents were given more hope when they heard the Word of God through the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:14, "Your children are holy. They are not unclean."

This is the time to start serving Christ. This is the time to teach our families so that they can be the good examples to the other families in our villages. The Christian child is taught humility, to hear, to do and to know the bad from the good. Whereas the one who does not believe is not taught. So the Christian child and the unbelieving child are not the same. These are the things that separate these two families, and the villagers look at these two houses separately. The family of the believers is observed and turned into God's useful equipment.

When I became an adult I attended some Bible studies. Because of these studies I knew that the way to hear and understand the Word of God is to read the Bible and to seek some explanations from others. When I read my Bible I often come across the verses that are related to my life, my family, my friends, my brothers, my neighbors and leaders and governors of my country and of other countries. Sometimes I feel like crying. I have visions of the unity of Christ's church.

When I graduated for ministry at the theological school in Morija, the head of that school, T. Seala, when giving out our certificates, said, "Go through the whole world and tell the good news. As for me, I haven't taught you any gospel except the gospel of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the one who died and rose again." After that my church sent me to Koalabata to proclaim the Word of God to my neighbors, my people.

Because God had his own ways of accomplishing things, he had already joined the African churches that were expelled from the European churches. Through God's help, Walter Mattita united these churches and turned them into the African Federal Council of Churches.

Now this council helped us with the Bible teachers. These teachers (AIMM missionaries) arrived in Lesotho in 1977. They came with their families. They loved visiting our families and shared food together as children of the same family. These studies are helping people like pastors and Sunday school teachers and those who don't know how to read and write.

My purpose for improving and carrying on with my call and vision is to pray for peace and unity among our people and other nations. Our faith is one. God the Father is one. May our God help us find the difference between evil and good as the one family of faith.

*Stephen Monyatsi*

# CONTENTS

Africa is a vast continent teeming with people. These people come from a cultural mosaic as varied or more varied than any other continent. This variety has its beauty when the groups live and work in harmony. When it erupts into levels of maturity that conflict with one another, it can also be ugly.

The Mennonite mission presence has found acceptance from the beginning, partly because of its readiness to build bridges instead of creating walls. As representatives of Jesus Christ, the Mennonites in Africa serve to build wholeness in individuals, families and communities by proclaiming the Word of God and demonstrating the love of God.

This issue is dedicated to show the gospel at work through Mennonites in Africa.


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# editorial

## *Untying knots that were tight*

*Erwin Rempel*

"Larry Hills is untying knots that were tight." As I listened to this enthusiastic affirmation of Larry's Bible teaching ministry among Africa Independent Church leaders in the Transkei, I found myself saying, "Aha! The mission of the church in today's world could well be described as untying knots that are tight." Perhaps this is one meaning of the "loosing" ministries Jesus referred to.

Five weeks of exposure to the ministries of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission on the African continent convinced me of the reality of tight knots and of the significant way our missionaries are helping untie them.

Tight knots—political, economic, spiritual, emotional, structural—characterize the African continent and its 455 million people. The church offers hope in the midst of hopelessness and despair. Witness a few examples of knots being loosened:

Africa Independent Churches, bursting with enthusiasm of new life in Christ, face knotty theological issues, including the role of ancestors and sacrifices. One leader approached Larry Hills in Transkei, obviously perplexed. He had been reading the Bible and had trouble understanding why God was spoken of as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three Gods? Larry was able to explain something of the mystery of the trinity—an unraveling of a theological knot.

Harlan de Brun, unlike many new missionaries, went to the streets on the first Sunday after his arrival in Lesotho and invited people to church. Several responded and one man became a follower of Jesus Christ. He is now a regular member of Harlan's Bible teaching classes. A spiritual knot of eternal value unraveled.

Linguistic knots prevent six tribal groups in Burkina Faso (Upper Volta) from learning of the grace of God in Christ. No Scriptures are available in the mother tongues. AIMM is responding with three linguistic teams which eventually will translate the Bible into the tribal languages. The Holy Spirit, however, does not wait for the final printed page of Scripture. Already 13 people have become believers in Jesus Christ and a fledgling church is emerging.

After working in a South African mine and for a white South African farmer, pastor Mphela discovered that vegetable seeds came up for him and that people bought vegetables from him. The knots of inferiority and incompetency ingrained by the apartheid system were unraveled.

Knots of bitterness and hatred often paralyze people and their potential for witness. Obsession with the injustices of apartheid sometimes leads black South African and white expatriates to "hate" the oppressor. Murial Manyadu, a 70-year-old church leader, has suffered repeatedly the injustices of apartheid but refuses to allow bitterness and hatred to poison her relationships with her oppressors.

Tight knots, I have discovered, are not only found in Africa. We too are bound by values, prejudices, cultural practices and assumptions. Visiting African churches and meeting our Christian brothers and sisters helped me recognize some of my own knots.

We in the United States and Canada assume that genuine happiness depends to a large extent on physical well-being. African Christians demonstrate that this Western assumption can be a tight knot crippling our ability to experience Christian joy. It was amazing to observe that our brothers and sisters in Zaire experienced genuine joy in spite of having so little of what we consider necessity.

Another knot for many of us is not being able to freely express our faith in Christ, whether in worship or in informal conversation. The joyful expressions of a living faith in African worship services and the daily chapels held in hospitals, schools and church administration offices evidence a faith that is free from the embarrassed form of Christian expression so common among us.

Often we are tied in knots as Western churches so that church discipline becomes an impossibility. In Zaire we witnessed disciplinary action of the national church (CMZ) with two of its pastors. They were defrocked of their ordination and removed from their pastoral roles. A spirit of cleansing was evident as a result. At another village, president Mbonza of the CMZ reinstated a former president who had been disciplined for the past couple of years. A spirit of love and acceptance following repentance was experienced.

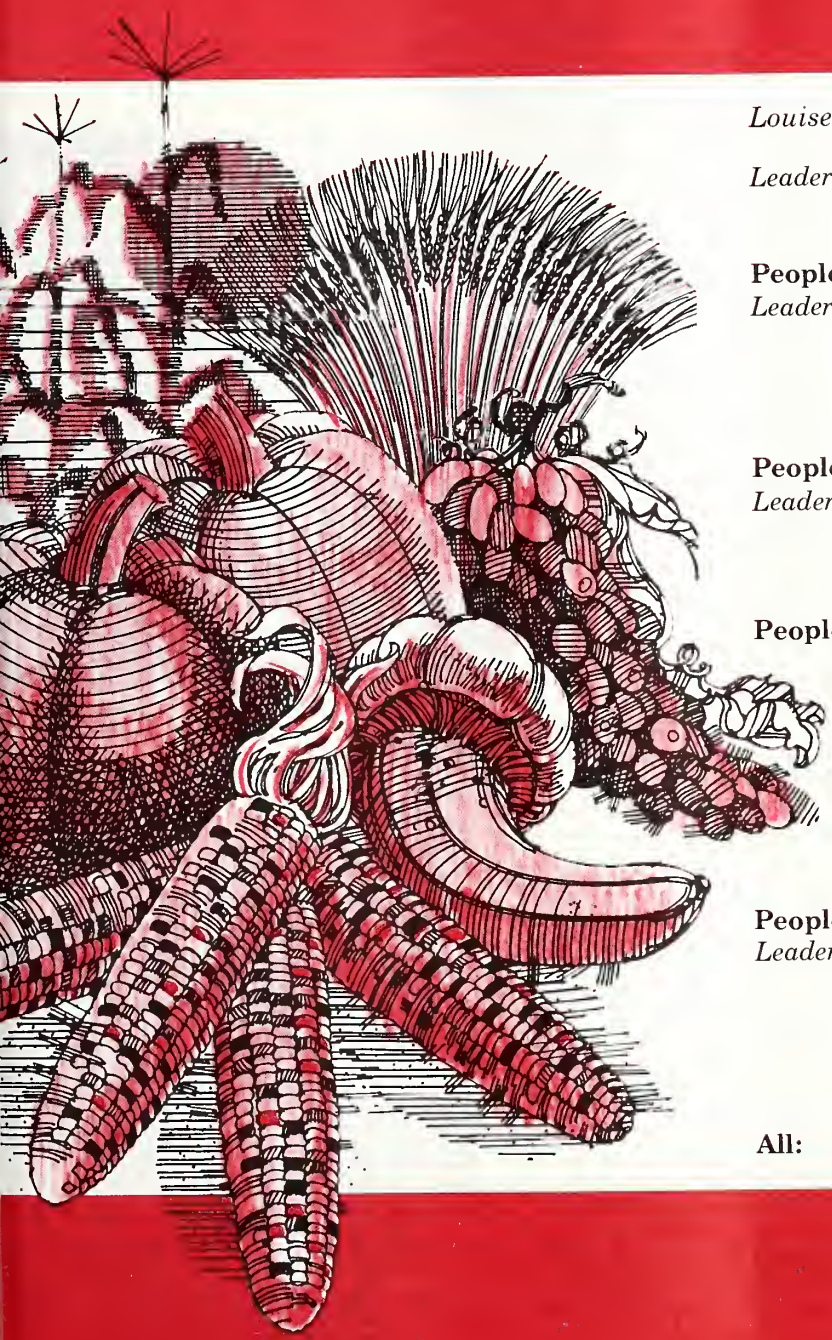
Untying tight knots—a metaphor of the loosing ministry of the church—is much needed in our other churches and in Africa.

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99.24 NOVEMBER 20, 1984

# Thanksgiving Litany



*Louise Dueck*

*Leader:* We come before you, O Lord, with grateful hearts for the blessings and harvests we have enjoyed at your bountiful hand this year.

**People:** **In everything we give thanks to you, O Lord.**

*Leader:* We thank you for the provision of our material needs—food, clothes, shelter—and we thank you for spiritual fulfillment in knowing love of family and friends and harmony within our fellowship.

**People:** **In everything we give thanks to you, O Lord.**

*Leader:* We thank you for inspiring ever new visions of service and equipping us with the means, expertise and dedication in making these visions concrete realities.

**People:** **In everything we give thanks to you, O Lord.**

*Leader:* We thank you too for showing us new ways of cooperating with other bodies of believers so that our combined strengths produce greater works than we could ever manage alone, and we dedicate these works to you, O Lord, the author and the finisher of our faith.

**People:** **In everything we give thanks to you, O Lord.**

*Leader:* We thank you for the privilege of being chosen children of God, for the freedom to worship and serve you in the way we interpret your Word, for your gift of the Spirit to encourage and sustain us, and especially for the fellowship we share in the community of faith.

**All:** **In everything we give thanks to you, O Lord.**

# Know your self

*Joyce Bontrager Troyer*

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (Matthew 23:27-28, *NIV*).

Jesus spoke these biting words *not* to the obvious sinners but to outwardly pious religious leaders. He did not condemn acts of obedience and conscious keeping of laws (Matthew 23:23). His harsh words spoke to the neglect of more important matters.

Our modern culture allows few opportunities to recite pharisaical prayers in public, but we continue to value outward performance. We too want others to notice our good works. While we lament clocks and deadlines, we hurriedly move from one task to the next and the next. Society rewards us with status commensurate to our achievements.

**Doing and being.** Even if we in the church ignore the lures of materialism and prestige, we face another temptation to perform. We confuse *being* a Christian with *doing* Christian acts. We easily become trapped in shoulds and have tos.

Not only do we listen to our false sense of duty, but we exert the same demands on others. "We really need you to teach Sunday school . . . serve as elder again . . . bake cookies for Bible school." We elevate doing, service and works above being.

It's not that doing is wrong. As James says, faith without works is dead. Error occurs when doing replaces being. Then who we are on the inside doesn't match our outer appearance. Because the things we "have to do" are "good," we easily lose perspective and rely on works to save us. We create for ourselves a self-righteousness based on doing.

Our self-righteousness frequently leads to a false perception of guilt. We feel guilty for not accomplishing all we should. We may attempt to impose guilt on others for not completing "their share." We may even feel angry if others fail to exhibit sufficient remorse when they refuse our entreaties. We create burdens God never intended us to bear, and then we expect others to help share our load.

We may even emphasize doing to such an extent that it becomes idolatry. We put faith in our ability to do rather than in God's grace. We equate church involvement with obedience to Christ, and we make service an end in itself. God *and* church become our top priority. But God, if he truly is our God, must reign supreme.

Obedience to Christ does involve crosses to carry, burdens to bear and tasks to accomplish. Guilt for not doing what God asks of us cannot be excused with positive thinking. It requires repentance and appropriate action. Discernment is needed to discover which tasks are obedient responses to God's call and which are illusions we use to cover our insecurities and inadequacies.

**Withdrawal is essential.** Such discernment requires self-knowledge, and self-knowledge requires self-honesty. The judging of motives, the listening to inner stirrings and the hearing of the Holy Spirit each requires silent withdrawal. Only as we withdraw can we face the truth of our needs and desires. Only as we withdraw can we own the thoughts and feelings we often project unconsciously to others. Only as we withdraw can we meet ourselves as we are and then turn our stripped, bare selves to God.

God created the complexities of our personalities. He knows our inner drives and conflicts better than we do. God longs to administer his healing love to our inner depths, but he can only redeem that which we give him. We cannot give that which we do not acknowledge.

The road to self-knowledge is often difficult and lonely. Discovering our selves means facing our human condition as we are, not how we wish we were. Because acquiring self-knowledge is painful, it requires overcoming many obstacles.

**It takes time.** Time is a precious commodity to us, and we try to justify how we spend it. We think reading the Bible and praying are sufficiently spiritual to escape criticism. But we label time taken for personal growth "self-centered," "navel gazing" or "too psychological."

We forget that spiritual growth corresponds to emotional growth. We ignore Jesus' frequent reminders that God looks upon the heart. We neglect his command to attend to the plank that is in our own eye (Matthew 7:3-5). Consequently, we mirror the parable of one blind man leading another. Both fall into a pit (Luke 6:39-42).

Removing the beam from our eye and uncovering our blind spots causes pain and consumes time. As we would not want a surgeon performing open heart surgery at a busy intersection, so we cannot conduct our self-examination in the midst of outer distractions. The inner conditions that hide behind the beam require careful diagnosis and ongoing treatment. We must persevere and recognize our continuing need for withdrawal. If we do not seek the time and place to be patiently thorough, we become like the pharisees who minded their outward appearances without regard for their inner selves.

*The path to self-discovery may seem at times like a long, not too pleasant, tunnel. But in spiritual discipline you will find new life.*

There are practices that can help us in the quest to know our selves. One is **meditation**. In contrast to the Eastern religious goal of detachment from both the inner and outer worlds, Christian meditation extends beyond emptying the mind. Richard Foster says, ". . . we must go on to *attachment*. The detach-

God longs to administer his healing love to all our needs—even at the inner depths—but he can only redeem that which we turn over (confess) to him in a spirit of seeking wholeness (repentance for being less than we can become).

ment from the confusion all around us is in order to have a richer attachment to God and to other human beings. Christian meditation leads us to the inner wholeness necessary to give ourselves to God freely, and to the spiritual perception necessary to attack social evils (*Celebration of Discipline*, p. 15).

A second practice to further our inner search is **journaling**. Writing helps us clarify our thoughts, feelings and reactions. It also enables us to continue learning from our experiences. Elizabeth O'Connor encourages us to become "journal-toting pilgrims": "Among our primary tools for growth are reflection, self-observation and self-questioning. The journal is one of the most helpful vehicles we have for cultivating these great powers in ourselves. . . . Journal writing is enforced reflection" (*Letters to Scattered Pilgrims*, p. 38).

A third practice which leads to self-knowledge is the **study of our dreams**. The parts of ourselves that we consciously deny or repress—the characteristics which hide beneath the beam in our own eye and direct our gaze to the speck in the other's eye—play significant roles in our nightly dramas. We must first take our dreams seriously enough to record them. Then meditating and journaling with our dreams in mind will begin to reveal the patterns and meanings of our dream symbols. The technique of free association—attending to all thoughts, images and feelings that spontaneously rise to consciousness—will assist our work with dreams and other perplexing reactions in our selves.

As with meditation and journaling, we will find that the study of our dreams relates to our outer lives. According to Morton Kelsey, a dream "encourages interpersonal relationships and points out unloving or selfish attitudes" (*Transcend: A Guide to the Spiritual Quest*, p. 69).

As we withdraw and begin to uncover the beam in our eye, we begin to balance activity with rest and relationships with solitude. We discover that withdrawal eventually leads us beyond our selves to meaningful activities and caring relationships that meet the needs of ourselves *and* others. Henri J. M. Nouwen describes this result of withdrawal: "Paradoxically, by withdrawing into ourselves, not out of self-pity but out of humility, we create the space for another to be himself and to come to us on his own terms. . . . When we have found the anchor places for our lives in our own center, we can be free to let others enter into the space created for them and allow them to dance their own dance, sing their own song and speak their own language without fear. Then our presence is no longer threatening and demanding but inviting and liberating" (*The Wounded Healer*, pp. 92-93).

In knowing my self, I allow God to work through me by working in me. In knowing my self, I discover that God is the source of true being and doing. •

# Mennonite families

*Maurice Martin*

In our traditional rural Mennonite enclaves, sociologists in the past discovered an island of contentment and family stability in the midst of the stormy seas of our changing and hurting society. "Gemeinde" they called it, thus drawing into sociological jargon a term out of our best theological tradition of peoplehood.

**No more secrets.** In recent years, however, the euphoria has worn off. The Mennonite family may not be so healthy as was once thought. Nor is it quite so traditional. And half of Canadian Mennonites and one-third of American Mennonites are now urban. This must surely radically alter our perceptions and experiences of family life and our description of "a happy, healthy family." More on this later.

Sociologists can perhaps best measure indicators of stability or change. But we may need to turn to the clinical counselor for indicators of health and happiness in Mennonite family life. Abe Schmitt comments, "When marriage problems occur, they look alike, no matter whether Mennonite, Lutheran or pagan! All of the issues found in society generally are found also in Mennonite homes and marriages—including homosexuality, incest, etc. They are just a bit more hidden because of the strong religious sanctions which prevail" (personal interview in 1983).

John Drescher adds, "Family and marriage problems in the Mennonite churches are of epidemic proportions and require an appropriate response" (personal interview).

The point of this exercise is not to be alarmist but to be realistic in our assessment. Only then can we build for the future. Many Mennonites are coming to grips in a firsthand way with the reality of marriage breakdown in their own extended or immediate families. And, as was sharply focused at Bethlehem '83, yes, there are gay people in our denominations. When the issues come closer to home, we can no longer pretend they do not exist. When there are no more secrets, we are prodded to rethink our attitudes and beliefs as they affect Mennonite family life.

**Risk and challenge.** Maintaining healthy family life in the midst of the changing scenes of modern society is for the Mennonite family both a risk and a challenge.

**Signs of crisis.** Drescher's impression is that marriage and family breakup is of epidemic proportions among Mennonites. What are some of the facts?

J. Howard Kauffman's 1956 thesis study of 149 Mennonite families in three states (Ohio, Indiana and Illinois) showed that less than 2 percent of marriages broke up in that group. In 1979 he did a follow-up study of 456 children from that group, constituting the second generation of marriages. Overall, 11 percent of those marriages ended in divorce. Of those who remained Mennonite, 7 percent were divorced. Of those who had no church membership at all, 39 percent were divorced (identical to the U.S. national average).

The Harder-Kauffman study of the early '70s, *Anabaptists 450 Years Later*, indicated that marriage breakup among Mennonites was 1 percent and rising.

In a denomination which holds a high view of stable family life and the permanence of marriage, these trends are

*The euphoria has worn off. Mennonite families too are experiencing the stresses and strains of today's world. But there is hope.*

significant enough to cause concern. In a recent lecture, Drescher asked, "How little effect does our church have on modern family life?" When I posed this question to Abe Schmitt, he replied, "Among Mennonites there is less emphasis on keeping the relationship alive. Marriage is seen as static, much is 'given'—the religious package, the common background, etc. We have the same needs for intimacy, caring and growth as the rest of society, but we work less at them. Church life is not growth oriented. Our emphasis is on the historic faith, fixed and not evolving. Authority structures tend to negate feelings. Mennonite families tend not to know how to deal with feelings."

Drescher suggests our minimum response as congregations must be to devote one month each year to preaching and teaching on family life concerns. In his congregation he assembles a "Family Life Packet" for each family in the congregation, covering 30 different topics. We need to offer marriage preparation courses for those contemplating marriage, and enrichment retreats for those who are married. We must work at "Preventative Family Life Care" in the congregation.

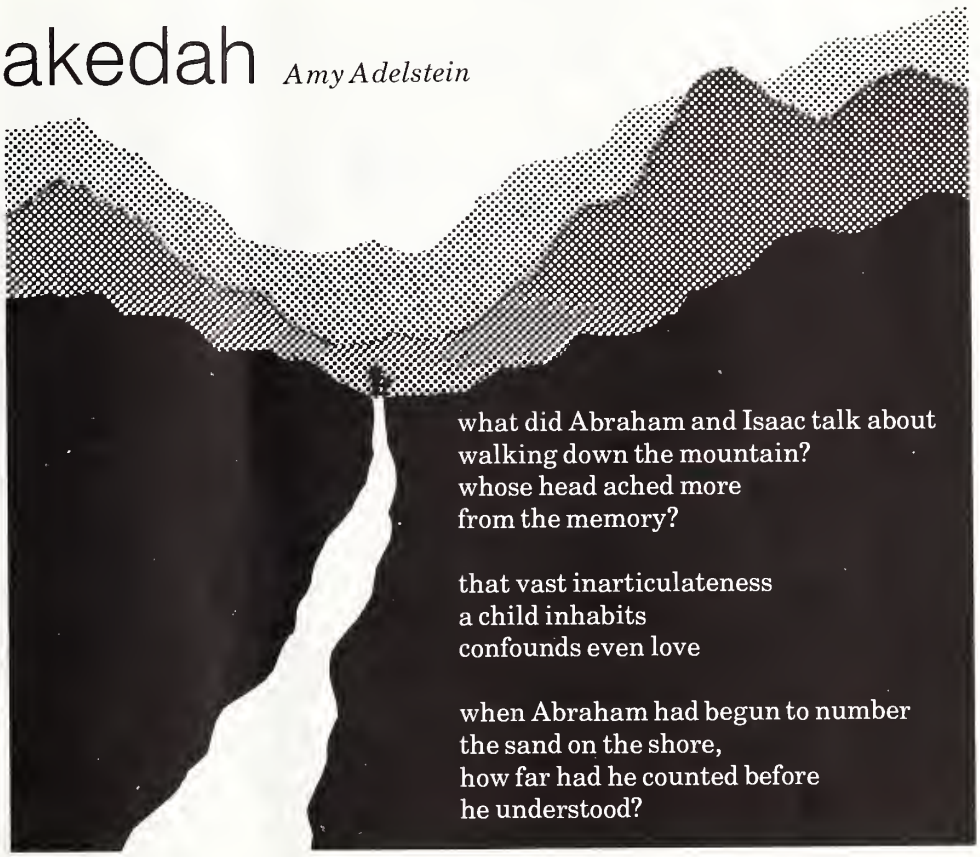
**Signs of change.** Mennonite family life is changing—by design or by default. Kauffman comments, "Changes in Mennonite family patterns seem to reflect the changes occurring among families in general. These result from urbanization, democratization and individualism. Our change is only somewhat less than the overall average."

Some changes are beneficial to families. We experience better health. We have more money and more economic security. We have more leisure time. Husbands and wives share more equally in decision making.

Some changes are detrimental to families. High on that list is the increased rate of marital breakup. There is the weakening of the kinship group, caused in part by more mobility, in part by urbanization and by increased individualism. With this, tradition is weakened as a way to regulate individual behavior.

## akedah

*Amy Adelstein*



what did Abraham and Isaac talk about
walking down the mountain?
whose head ached more
from the memory?

that vast inarticulateness
a child inhabits
confounds even love

when Abraham had begun to number
the sand on the shore,
how far had he counted before
he understood?

That also increases the generation gap.

Both parents are absent more from the home. Family members spend less time together. There is less opportunity for children to have a work apprenticeship in the home. And there is less place for the aged in homes of their children.

Opinion differs about the merit of some changes. Is it good that we have smaller families? Or is it a sign of increasing selfishness and individualism? Likewise, however valid the concern is for more mutuality of husbands and wives, many fear this may create sexual identity confusion. Individuality was a needed corrective of the entrenched group and role identity. However, individualism can also go to pot, creating lack of responsibility, says Leo Driedger (personal interview).

As Mennonites become less "Gemeinde" oriented, there is increased family contact with the wider world. High incidence of intermarriage is one result. There is ambivalence about this trend, says Driedger. On the whole our church has gained more members than it has lost through intermarriage.

There is ambivalence also about urbanization. Our rural stable society helps us retain a clear sense of identity but creates poorer social skills and even lack of social conscience, which undermines evangelism. As is often said in jest, "There is too much salt piled up all in one place for us to be the salt of the earth and do any good."

Our recent resurgence of Anabaptist theology has played down the sacramental aspects of marriage, in favor of relationalism. Is there a link between that and the fact that we experience everything from total marital fidelity to premarital sex and "living together"?

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*Marriage Encounter has become one of the most effective resources for preventative care in family life. It helps good marriages become even better.*

**Signs of hope and wellness.** There are also many encouraging signs. Juvenile delinquency rates are so low among Mennonites that they are barely recorded. We have few social problems. The kinship group is still important to us, evidenced in family reunions, Christmas gatherings and the importance of the gathered community in times of stress and celebration (e.g. funerals and weddings).

From the counselor's viewpoint, Schmitt says there is a resurgent search for new awareness regarding feelings, relationships, etc. The demand is great for workshops led by the clinically trained person who has become "a prophet to dispense a new wisdom for the Christian life!"

**Our challenges.** "Will the Mennonite family survive?" "Should the Mennonite family survive . . . in its present form?" Some suggest that we have become a "child-hating" society, evidenced not only by child abuse but by the various ways in which we subtly suggest that children are more of a nuisance than an asset in our greater goals for personal fulfillment. If this is the model of family life we wish to preserve, it needs a radical reshaping. Mennonites have become increasingly affluent and acculturated in lifestyle. This kind of Mennonite family needs changing.

Kauffman says the sociological evidence suggests that Mennonites are best adapted for country life. He does not say we should avoid the city. But we must be clear about our mission when we go there. We dare not be merely concerned with self-preservation.

The new sociological analysis suggests we can create a new kind of community, a social network more open than the old tight-knit and largely ingrown "Gemeinde." In biblical terms this means that we can "enlarge the place of (our) tent. . ." (Isaiah 54:2). It means also that we "seek the shalom of the city . . . for in its shalom you will find your shalom" (Jeremiah 29:7). Thus we link with others to embrace them in our enlarged sense of community. Thus we become "fishers of people" with a net spread wide to gently draw others into the kingdom.

For the modern Mennonite family there is an increased risk in urban living. There is the risk of losing ourselves and our Mennonite (ethnic) identity. But there is also the opportunity to be more Anabaptist and evangelical in the best sense of the word. The early Anabaptists were not afraid to take new risks for the sake of the gospel. Are we? *A Meetinghouse article* •

# Thank God for your commitment

*Ken Peterson*

In January 1979 the General Conference generously paid my way to attend a three-week course at Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The course Anabaptist History and Theology was taught by a warm and dedicated scholar, C. J. Dyck. He pointed out that about 1,500 to 2,500 Anabaptist martyrs died in the Netherlands, and about 4,000 died in Switzerland—about 6,500 early Anabaptists died for their dedicated faith in Christ.

**The early Anabaptists** embraced far more than an easy believism. Their belief was expressed in committed discipleship. Their belief meant they were willing to die for their faith in Christ. Their theology centered in "The Way of the Cross." Their system of belief defined Christian to mean commitment to follow Christ in their way of living, even if it meant dying as Christ had died.

They received their definition of Christian from the words of Jesus: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). This committed discipleship is expressed not only in a willingness to die literally, as has been the case throughout history at times, but the epistles see this taking up the cross daily as a deliberate effort of dying to self, yielding to the Spirit of Christ and disciplining the thoughts and actions to express the likeness of Christ.

**The early church** found itself in a society of extremes. The Pharisees lived by a strict code of exhaustive laws and were in slavery to the law. The Greeks lived permissively and were in slavery to sin. Christ came to set us free from slavery (Galatians 5:1). This freedom is not freedom to indulge in sinful practices (Galatians 5:13). We are warned, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). To be Christian is to be set free from this kind of lifestyle slavery. Christ washes us clean with his forgiving compassion. His Spirit enables us to live a new kind of life above this slavery.

Christ does not give us, however, the slavery of exhaustive laws. Basic morality remains, and the "law of love" is our motivation. What Christ gives us is a new inner power—his own presence by his Spirit. Since this law of the Spirit is inner and vital, it lifts, transforms us and fills us with more than negatives. We receive the positive of the Spirit.

**We as Christians** have in a multitude of ways experienced the gracious forgiveness of God through Christ's death on the cross. We continue to receive forgiveness in a variety of areas on a daily basis. We are, however, encouraged to reach upward to a higher place of living. Out of gratitude, because of his love for us, we are to take up our cross daily. We are to deny ourselves the indulgence of sinful thoughts and actions. We do not need to live on the lower level. We can deliberately discipline our minds, our attitudes, our thinking, our feeling, our doing, our living. We are implored in Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, I urge you . . . in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

The thought comes before the action. The attitude colors all we do. Christ wishes us to renew our minds. We can open the deep secrets of our being to him in prayer. We can control our inner thoughts and attitudes by denying ourselves the pleasure of indulging our being in evil thoughts, and out of our disciplined spirit will flow a new Christlike living. Jesus says to us, "Come, follow me." We are called to the freedom of daily committed discipleship, where the abundant life of joy and peace abound in Jesus Christ.

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# We also need the poor

*Donald E. Martin*

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33). There is a sense in which, at least erratically, all my life has been spent in learning what this early childhood Sunday school verse meant.

Five years ago, after 15 years of family practice medicine in my hometown of Hagerstown, Md., with a comfortable roomy house for my family (including an attached apartment for my mother) and a little nest egg of rental properties and some stocks for retirement income, my wife, Ellen, and I were asked to co-teach a Sunday school class on the Sermon on the Mount. I decided not to go through those familiar passages one more time without being open to finding out what shape putting the kingdom of heaven first in the 1980s would take for me.

The study began anew a restlessness within me about the amount of money we spent on our style of living. Then we attended one of the annual meetings of the Peace Section of Mennonite Central Committee. From the meeting I gained a deeper conviction about the connection of peace and justice. Uprisings and wars grew out of our greed to protect our abundance and the underprivileged pushing for more of their fair share.

Soon after that I read the *Time* article on interviews with children who had lived all their lives in war zones. I was touched with the gentleness and lack of vindictiveness of these children. The author of the article asked, "What occurs in the lives of these children that causes them to take up arms by the time they reach adulthood?" I had a vision that if these children's needs could be met in the name of Christ, it might be possible to prevent the shift. We set a goal to sponsor 10 children. It was reached and exceeded. That helped to cut down the amount of money we spent on ourselves and the amount of taxes we paid toward paying for war.

Next we attended a money workshop at Wellspring, a retreat center which is a mission of the Church of the Saviour in Washington. Here we first learned of the ministry of Columbia Road Health Services to the health care of the poor in Washington. Here too we were challenged to plan a personal encounter with the poor to learn from them as well as care for them. Third World tours were available. It seemed to fit us better to offer to give one day a week of service to the poor at Columbia Road Health Services, only 70 miles from home, than to give six weeks in Calcutta and Thailand. So we offered ourselves and the offer was accepted.

*A Lebanese mother and her son sit on their suitcase while they take a moment to comfort each other. Jesus says, "Blessed are the poor. . . ." There is a blessing we can only learn from the poor.*

During this same period of time we decided to sell the rental properties and to move into a smaller home for ourselves. This reduced the supposed nest egg for retirement and freed us more to trust the future to God. It also made us debt free so that we could trust the present to God. We thought we'd reached a pretty satisfactory interpretation of putting God's kingdom first.

After nine months of commuting to Washington one day a week, we began to sense the physical toll this was taking. We counseled with a few close friends and asked the health service for a six-week reprieve to decide how or if we could continue a medical practice in Hagerstown and a day of volunteering in D.C. The last day of volunteer work I thought I would never be back again.

But I couldn't forget. The faces of the homeless men standing in line for food and medical and dental care grew on

me. The plight of the alcoholic who never knew a father and had no one to take his part in his first scrapes with authority touched me. The need of the poor for something more than an examination and a prescription for an expensive drug from an emergency room to be turned out on the street with no way to get the prescription filled ate at me. The question which was probably in my unawareness for a year began to pop occasionally into awareness, "Am I being called to work full time in D.C.?"

In the spring of 1983 I attended a Dayspring retreat to test the call. I wrote in my journal, "I have lived through the fears and the hopes; the hopes outweigh the fears. It would be disobedient not to go." I called Dr. Janelle Goetcheus, medical director of Columbia Road Health Services, to tell her I was coming.

Another journal entry a year later read, "When I most enjoyed what I was doing—when I had listened to God about the use of resources and time—when I thought I could settle back and enjoy a less demanding life, the radical call came." It became clear that I could not enjoy anything by settling back. My joy was going to be at the point of trusting God and obeying his call.

I agree with Walter Brueggemann when he says, "We order our lives differently because we know something the world doesn't know. We embrace a vision the world doesn't honor, and we trust a promise-keeper the world doesn't trust" (*Living Toward a Vision*, p. 129).

Columbia Road Health Services provides physicians for three different locations in D.C. where the poor are served. My time is divided equally between two of them. At the S.O.M.E. (So Others Might Eat) Health Service my patients are primarily homeless men. About 30 percent have been discharged from the large mental hospital in the city without adequate community support. Nearly 60 percent have problems with addictions. Most come from broken homes. The two good meals provided daily in the S.O.M.E. kitchen help build the trust necessary for them to seek medical care.

At Columbia Road Health Services we are seeing an ever growing number of Central American refugees who have fled the violence, destruction and unrest of war. Most of them have experienced loss of a family member in the fighting.

*Some Mennonite Voluntary Service unit members in Georgia attend the church of which former President Carter is a member. He has expressed sincere support for their work.*

*Could that have had anything to do with Carter himself joining a group of 40 volunteers? They went to fix up this broken down building in New York as a Habitat for Humanity project to provide housing for poor people.*

Many of them are separated from spouses and children and hope to find a way to bring their families later. Because they are here illegally, they often take low-paying jobs and find the cost of living makes it difficult to afford medical care. The deep stresses of their lives produces many physical symptoms and illnesses. The low-cost health care we provide does make a difference.

*Donald E. Martin, a member of the Mennonite Medical Association, is one of the physicians serving through Columbia Road Health Services, 1660 Colombia Road, N.W., Washington, DC 20009, an inner-city ministry of Church of the Saviour since 1979. In August they saw an average of 264 patients per week, and their expenses were $22,000 above income.*

*Janelle Goetcheus, medical director, wrote a letter at that time, wondering if some of our readers would like to share in this ministry with financial support. How about it?*

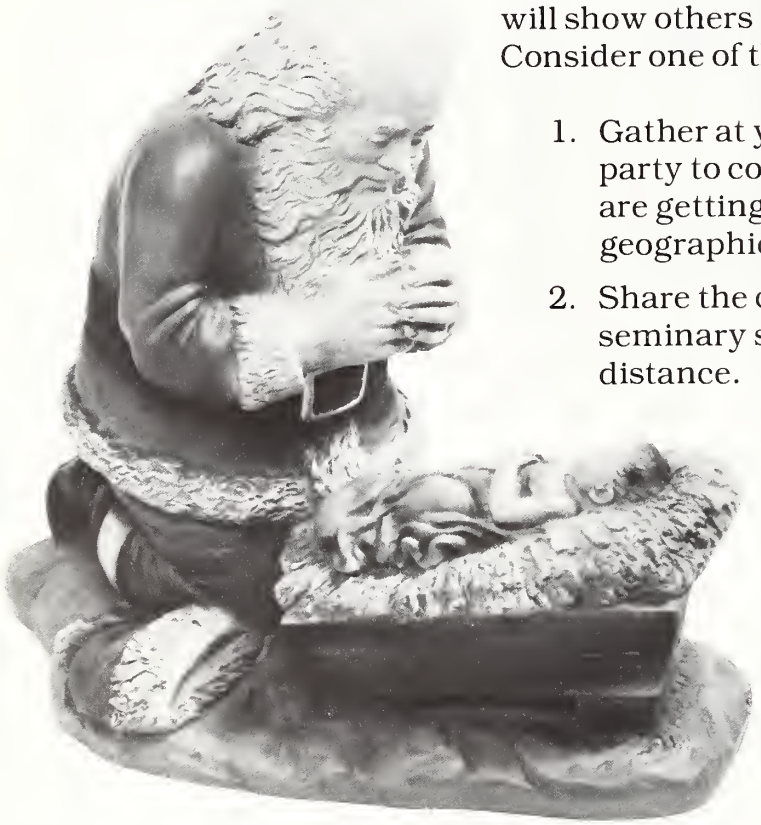
*This is the time of year to carefully examine our year-end giving and our plans for next year. Many people would do family and friends a great favor if we'd give gifts (money and things and time) to needy people (possibly dedicating it also in their names) instead of adding to the "more than enough" that they already get. By that we're not suggesting to omit care and special gifts to family and friends. We are suggesting that we exercise a more global perspective. Jesus came because God loved the world.*

# *For God so loved . . .*

## How will you celebrate Christmas this year?

## By exchanging gifts? Decorating the tree? Planning family get-togethers?

Fine. These are important parts of Christmas for many of us.



This year, though, add another dimension. Take on a project that will show others that you care, that you want to love as God loved. Consider one of the following:

1. Gather at your church for a letter-writing or phone call party to contact non-resident members and ask how they are getting along. Show your concern regardless of the geographic gap.
2. Share the costs for a Christmas homeward trip for a seminary student, especially one who must travel a long distance.
3. Exchange Christmas greetings with a Mennonite church or a missionary overseas on behalf of either yourself or your congregation. Share meaningful ways you have celebrated Christmas and ask them to do likewise.
4. In addition to gift exchanges in families, buy a book or tape for your church library.
5. Invite a foreign family or seminary student to experience Christmas in your home.
6. Present your pastor or someone else in your church with a travel scholarship to attend "Alive '85," the inter-Mennonite evangelism training event to be held in Denver April 11-14, 1985.
7. Visit a mission station or a newly planted church. Offer encouragement and share their struggles, joys and concerns.
8. Christmas is good news. Give a copy of *I Heard Good News Today* by Cornelia Lehn to a child or family with children so they can become more familiar with mission stories.
9. Parents of married children could pay the $15 registration fee for each couple to attend a Mennonite Marriage Encounter weekend, or help to arrange for child care.

***This year, spread God's love to others. After all, we love because God first loved us.***

For more information, contact

General Conference Mennonite Church

722 Main St., Box 347
Newton, KS 67114-0347

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4

Consultation draws 185

# Dialogue on Faith a microcosm of conference

Camp Lake, Wis. (GCMC)—Participants came to the much anticipated Dialogue on Faith from all points of the spectrum of General Conference Mennonitism—geographical, personal chronological, theological. They were, in a manner of speaking, a microcosm of this conference—an organization which defies definition. It seemed, however, that all wanted to belong. The corporate tone of voice was one of caring, listening, learning.

First, geographical representation. One-third of the approximately 185 participants came from Canada. Every district and province was represented, though few came from Alberta and the Northern District. (Northern District had its own Consultation on Faith the previous weekend.) Several carloads and a bus of people (notably a group from Oklahoma) put in marathon stints of highway driving in order to participate.

Second, chronological. Four could be called elders—over about age 75. (When someone was needed who remembered the conference sessions of 1929 and the issue discussed there, Menno Schrag of Newton, Kan., rose to the occasion.) Four were students, lured from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, for four days by some undoubtedly well-invested financial help from the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. In between, the rest came in all ages.

Third, theological. People struggled to determine what it means to be Anabaptist in today's world. They had different opinions on that. Worship, however, bound them up—even though worship took several different forms. Sometimes a formal worship bulletin was used. Sometimes people clapped as they sang.

*A small group dialogues during its short time together.*

*Sign welcoming participants*

Sometimes they read from the Scriptures and were led in prayer.

The stated theological goal was to listen and understand tough issues. Some brought congregational statements and wished the conference would do the same. Others said that is difficult if not impossible because this conference is by definition pluralistic. Historically congregations have been allowed different perspectives.

Comments included, "Why are we as a group shy about our personal relationship with Jesus?" "Scriptures must interpret the community, not vice versa." "There comes a point when diversity causes pain and it's very hard to work." "We need to be a people of compassion as well as conviction." "We need to do more than listen and dialogue. The 'fringe' congregations aren't here and therefore can't listen." "Congregations are places to interpret Scripture." "Interpretation of Scripture is major, but also important is that we be acquainted with each other." "We aren't making Scripture, we're discovering it." "I can't celebrate all of our diversities. What do we have in common?" "When we are swept up in the tidal wave of God's love, we are one. It is a work of God's grace when different gifts contribute to one whole." "We get things out in the open and then we go home and search the Scriptures." "We are learning to speak the truth in love. We need both honesty and love."

Two historical world views emerged. Some felt that language is passed along with minimal change, that words have an absoluteness about them. Others felt that the user of language is very much a part of that language, and this produces differences. There *has* to be tension. "But," assured Denny Weaver of Bluffton, Ohio, "acceptance of one 'world view' does not mean total rejection of the other. The middle of the ladder holds the two ends together. The continuum needs both ends. Even when the two views create difficulty, they need each other."

People were helped by parables. Ken Bauman from Berne, Ind., told about the different tools that it takes to build a pulpit. Dave Thiessen from Winnipeg said, "It's like a couple with marital problems. Sometimes there's no solution and there comes a time when each needs to say to the other, 'I am commmitted to you.' " Mel Friesen told about a time when language meant different things to different people. Some travelers in Brazil were told, "Don't drink their water," and were surprised to find that it meant, "If you drink their water you might like it and decide to stay away, but we want you here because we love you." Ruth Naylor spoke personally about understanding how Noah felt, building a boat when there was no public forecast of rain. We go out in faith, not knowing.

The conclusion: the General Conference Mennonite Church is people, not institutions. Structurally it makes little sense. The beauty is, said Rudy Regehr of Winnipeg, that it makes so much sense. *Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

**Faith Mennonite Church,** Montezuma, Kan., marked the dedication of a new meetinghouse. The congregation was formed in the past year with Ervey Unruh as pastor. There are 22 charter members. The church plans to affiliate with both the Western District Conference (General Conference) and the South Central Conference (Mennonite Church).

**First Mennonite Church** of Pretty Prairie, Kan., celebrated its annual harvest mission festival at the end of September. Peter and Lois Voran, Commission on Overseas Mission missionaries in Japan, were featured guests. Offerings of over $24,000 were designated for home and foreign missions. The congregation's 100th anniversary came in August, reports Elaine Brown, church correspondent, and in October the church placed several articles in a new stainless steel cornerstone when the 1884 cornerstone was removed.

**"Tim gave me my faith back,"** reported a senior citizen in the Friendly Visitor Service program in St. Catharines, Ont. Mennonite Voluntary Service workers and two Mennonite congregations in St. Catharines developed a program for senior citizens. MVS workers Tim and Carol Bjorkman a year ago and more recently Ingrid Loepp and Kathy Shuck found people cut off from Christian community and began leading a Bible study for the senior citizens. Some who felt the absence of human connections found that the restoration of the Christian community also meant the renewal of faith. Two people have been baptized at their request.

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# We talked of faith, but dialogue still needs to happen

Camp Lake, Wis.—Nobody knew quite what to expect when 185 General Conference people assembled here at the Salvation Army's Camp Wonderland, Oct. 26-28, for a Dialogue on Faith called by the GC's General Board. Some asked if this camp (Wonderland) was chosen for its name. Purposes of the dialogue had been spelled out in the promotion (to seek the unity of God's Spirit as we openly dialogued on diverse interpretations in discerning biblical truth and practice), but many were not aware what this was all about.

The General Board had been getting increasing pressure from churches and church leaders to deal in some uniform way on issues like war taxes, ordination of women, abortion and—most vocally—on homosexuality. People seemed unsatisfied with the common GC cliché, "Unity in essentials, diversity in nonessentials and charity in all things." Some said the GC diversity has gone beyond the unity in essentials stage and wonder if it is any longer biblical to be charitable in all things. They feel that a basic commitment to the Anabaptist, evangelical, orthodox views of the Bible has been eroded and that consequent practices by some GCs are therefore not biblical.

This suspicion has not been onesided. Other GCs said that some of the membership is caught up in civil religion and fundamentalistic commitments to wooden interpretations of the Bible. They feel this results in stifling the Holy Spirit from moving us into the world as salt and light even in the most controversial and volatile issues of our time.

*James Juhnke reviews authority and leadership patterns in GC history.*

And the GC diversities were gathering with their own empathizers and failing to engage in broader face-to-face dialogue via God's Word and amidst prayers for the Holy Spirit's enlightenment among the larger GC family.

The GC General Board decided to create an arena for dialogue. That 185 people—including about one-fifth of the leading pastors in the conference—came was evidence of its being taken seriously.

Program planners had created a heavy agenda of input for the dialogue. It was done so that much of the diversity would be heard. Most presentations were set up to hear divergent points of view.

The telling of GC diversities did take place in a way this may have never before happened, although there was reference to a 1929 GC triennial session about belonging to secret societies.

As usual, speakers spoke too long. The dialogue times had to be cut. And the senses became overloaded. It was impossible to pick up on all that was said.

Actual dialogue, therefore, was rare on the plenary floor. In the small groups (I skimmed about half their reports) an amazing spirit of dialogue occurred, considering the limited time given to these groups. It is regrettable that this could not be shared in the larger context.

One outstanding feature of the weekend was the singing together. (If we could only learn to translate that into trusting together!) The six personal testimonies (faith stories) had an impact on most people present. The openness, integrity and articulation with which speakers related their topics—unity and truth, diverse approaches to the Bible, inclusive language, discernment of authority, Anabaptist expression, among others—was refreshing. They spoke with conviction and one could feel it was not in isolation. It felt as if their input was also Spirit-breathed and blessed—without exception.

*Part of the time was given to a "faith walk" patterned after the post-resurrection Emmaus walk of Jesus (Luke 24). Naomi Strunk (left) and J. W. Sprunger set out on their faith walk.*

Several biblical principles came through on which I heard no quarrel. God did not create us as clones and he is obviously not offended by uniqueness. There can be no adequate Christian unity without its being rooted in both the written and the living Word. We all approach the Bible with some assump-

*continued on p. 565*

**On the morning of** Sept. 18, Mennonites Esther Kisamore, 44, and Peter Sprunger-Froese, 34, entered Consolidated Space Operations Center near Colorado Springs, Colo., with a banner reading "There is SPACE for everyone unless we MILITARIZE it." They were arrested and charged with second-degree trespass. Kisamore and Sprunger-Froese, members of the Bijou House community, described their entry as a means of seeking dialogue with workers at the site. "We want workers to understand the link between militarizing space and escalating the arms race."

**Confession** is not only good for the soul but for the body as well, asserts a Southern Methodist University psychologist who is well-known for his contributions to behavioral medicine. In a series of studies, James Pennebaker has demonstrated that confiding in others, while often painful, seems to have long-term health benefits. His research appears to show that the act of confiding in someone else protects the body against damaging internal stresses that are the penalty for carrying around an onerous emotional burden such as unspoken remorse.

**In a Chinese dialect** a high school senior shared with her congregation how 15 young people out of 21 in their youth group had made decisions for Christ at the Pacific District Conference youth camp this summer. A translator stood beside her and retold the good news in Cambodian to the part of the congregation using that language. The congregation of recent immigrants to North America is called the Santa Clara (Calif.) Ethnic Chinese Mennonite Church.

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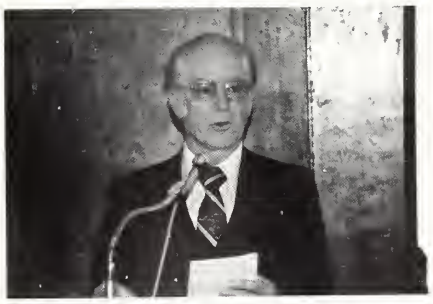
tions or propositions. Our approach to the Bible must be wholistic. Experience and culture influence how we understand the Bible. God has "begraced" us in Christ and it is only in his grace that we learn to see our diverse insights and gifts as part of the larger people of God.

On some of the controversial practices within our GC family we did not get to the dialogue stage. We heard conflicting polemics and some contradictory testimonies about women's ordination and roles in the church, about inclusive language, about divorced church leaders, about war taxes and civil disobedience, about literal and absolute beliefs in the Bible, about process approaches to hermeneutics, about relational truth and propositional truth, about conviction and compassion, about the inspiration of the Bible and how the early Anabaptists viewed this, and about our emphasis on Christology.

Disagreements—at least at this stage—emerged on how to discern the authority of the Bible (Does it interpret us or do we interpret it?), how to discern which propositions of the Bible are essential (once prayer veils were a test of orthodoxy; is all-tax-paying patriotism also a principle that will change?), how to relate to issues not specifically addressed in the Bible (What is the difference between servant leadership and a more monolithic, centralized credalism?), and on how to weigh the pronouncements of the Bible (Is the Sermon on the Mount more absolute than the Old Testament teachings about God's wrath?).

Because of the limited dialogue time, we probably had too little chance to discern God's Word about the church and how we can be one though having many members and various gifts (1 Corinthians 12). And we had too little time to "see Jesus" (John 12:21).

But we all learned more about our GC



*Paul Goossen speaks on what it means to be an Anabaptist Christian today.*

family than we had known before. We know there are more than two diversities and that a simple set of labels is inadequate to define our family. Our family has shown it is willing to talk and tell in a sincere spirit. And we can speak in language that all can understand.

That was step one. Before we know that our diversities are irreconcilable or compatible, we must take step two. We need more dialogue. The General Board has already decided to work for this in another consultation next fall.

At that occasion the Bible and Christ must be the agenda. Let's have less input and more dialogue.

We know more about our GC family than we did before this dialogue. But we see through a glass dimly. The Holy Spirit's help is still much needed to help us see who and how we truly are. *Bernie Wiebe*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**A "Consultation on Faith"** was held Oct. 22-24 in Freeman, S.D., in place of the annual pastor and spouse retreat in the Northern District Conference. All pastors and spouses plus three or four lay leaders from each congregation were urged to attend, especially leaders of youth and women's activities. Topics included "Wholeness and Salvation," "Our Anabaptist Journey," "Peace with God and Man," "Interpreting the Bible," "Wholesome Family Living" and "The Sexual Revolution."

**"The Word of God is being sought** with real and sincere interest," according to a report reaching the American Bible Society from co-workers in the African nation of Angola. But currency restrictions and other economic hardships, as well as fighting in the south, have forced up the cost of Bibles to a point where they are now beyond the reach of most people. When Scriptures do arrive, all of which have to be imported, people have been known to stand in line for hours to get a copy.

**Freeman (S.D.) Junior College** has embarked on its 82nd year. It has traditionally drawn its support from local constituents of the General Conference. That community of resource for FJC is almost completely agriculture-based. When spring floods caused late planting and the growing season was cut short by early frost, the school faced uncertain economic conditions. FJC requested and received approval from the executive committee of the General Conference for a denominational and churchwide appeal for funds. "Strength for Tomorrow" has been chosen as the theme for this campaign, which hopes to bring in $350,000.

## General Board focuses on development plan

Camp Lake, Wis.—Meeting just prior to the specially called Dialogue on Faith and on the same grounds, the Oct. 25-26 semiannual meetings of the General Conference's General Board and staff tried hard to keep its focus on scheduled agenda. Every so often that agenda was sidetracked by comments about the dialogue that was to begin immediately after closing the board sessions.

Major focus was given to the development plan, which has completed its first round of presentations at various levels of conferences. Endorsement for the idea has been heard, and the next steps had to be approved. Carol Suter, development director, requested and received permission to work with professional consultants in developing a strategy to carry out such a fund-raising and projects development program for the whole General Conference and at all its levels. While the idea has been endorsed, there will be a special proposal to the March 1985 Council of Commissions on how, what and who will do the campaign. If that is approved, full-scale research will be done about exact projects and programs to be developed. These will then be brought to the 1986 GC triennium at Saskatoon for final approval and launching. From the GB discussions, the excitement and enthusiasm appear to be growing for this new venture. It portends to affect the total GC family and programs at all levels.

The Sweet Home Community Chapel, Sweet Home, Ore., has expressed the desire to withdraw from any GC connections. However, to date that request had come only to the Pacific District Conference. Therefore, the General Board decided to pursue further dialogue.

The GB approved an 8 percent increase for the 1985 budget over 1984 receipts. The costs of staff salaries and fringe benefits will increase about 5 percent. Another step approved was for the GC employees to become part of a self-insurance health-care program that will also encourage preventative health care.

*Carol Suter reports on development plan.*

Human sexuality, the recurring GB agenda item, once again came up for some airing. There is growing awareness of the immense scope this includes and the concern that it will be difficult to process at triennial sessions.

A resolution of appreciation was passed for the ministry of Janice and Norman Schmidt of Quakertown, Pa., who have been doing itinerant services in many GC churches during the year.

Mennonite Biblical Seminary was named as the focus for a next major GC program review.

The GB invited Bernie Wiebe to a fourth term as editor of *The Mennonite* (1985-88). Ted Stuckey was appointed for another term as business manager and treasurer (1985-87).

Following the Dialogue on Faith, in a brief session, the GB decided to plan a follow-up study conference on Bible interpretation for the fall of 1985. *Bernie Wiebe*

*The General Board met in this log cabin for two days.*

**During the 1983-84 season,** 278 couples attended a Mennonite Marriage Encounter weekend. Twelve weekends were held in the 1983-84 season. Since MME began in 1979 following the mandate from the 1977 Bluffton triennial conference, 53 MME weekends have been held, with 1,281 couples participating. Eight General Conference congregations have sent 10 or more couples to MME. Members in one-third of the churches of the General Conference have participated with churches sending one or two couples.

*Leonides Saucedo is baptized by Roberto Sequiera. Steve Fath, Mennonite Board of Missions worker, holds the basin of water.*

**The six Bolivian Mennonite churches** from around Cotoca, a town 12 miles east of Santa Cruz, met together in early September for an all-day celebration and worship service. There Leonides Saucedo became the first Mennonite in the Santa Cruz, Bolivia, area to be baptized by a Bolivian brother. Roberto Sequiera, leader in the Santa Cruz congregation, sprinkled water over Saucedo's head.

# Mennonite Brethren celebrate missions, not cooperation

Reedley, Calif.—If the 1984 General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, which met here Oct. 12-16, proved anything, it was that missions is the heart of the Mennonite Brethren fellowship.

Prior to the convention, members of the Board of Missions and Services had met for several days, including a full day with overseas church leaders. Without exception, board members and staff described the day as the highlight of the meetings. Hearing church leaders describe the life and witness—and struggles—of the national churches was a thrilling experience, they said.

The theme of the convention, "The Gospel Is Growing," provided ample opportunity to celebrate what has happened to MB missions. Board chairman Frank C. Peters noted that the national conferences which have emerged around the world are "keen on affiliation with other conferences" and readily feel the kinship with Mennonite Brethren elsewhere. Mennonite Brethren outside North America now outnumber those in the Canadian and U.S. churches by almost three to one in a worldwide fellowship of over 130,000. The younger churches are relating to those who brought them the gospel as partners. Keen leaders have emerged in many places, able to give strong leadership to the witness of the church.

Main speaker Ravi Zacharias, a riveting speaker with roots in India, talked a great deal about the kind of people Christians must be if they are to be strong spokesmen for the gospel in a world of mushrooming cities, religion united to politics and resorting to violence, a world in which bald eagles enjoy more protection than unborn fetuses and in which pornography with children has become an international disgrace, a world with millions of homeless people.

The Mennonte Brethren leader who most deserves the title of "father of the church," J. B. Toews of Fresno, Calif., reminded the conference in a message that the mission of the Mennonite Brethren church had been carved out by people who had decided that they loved God more than children or parents or, indeed, houses and lands or life itself.

When the conferences Board of Reference and Counsel, which has been entrusted with the responsibility to watch over matters of faith and life came to the delegation with a resolution which asked them to "affirm baptism by immersion as a prerequisite to ordination," delegates balked.

A statement on biblical authority which recommended that the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy be "recognized as an acceptable summary of (the Mennonite Brethren) position" was likewise roundly criticized. Those who spoke did so not to argue for a lower view of inspiration, but to insist that the creedalism reflected in the statement did not fit a Mennonite approach to the Scriptures.

The strongly male-oriented leadership of the church was barely changed at the Reedley convention. It was only after Winnipeg delegate Peggy Regehr admonished the conference leadership for showing a "lack of enthusiasm" for involving women, even though a resolution brought to the convention urged churches "to continue to . . . draw upon the spiritual resources found in our sisters for various ministries," that a serious attempt was made to come forward with more women nominees for church boards. As a result two were elected to the Board of Missions and Services, Fran Hiebert of Pasadena, Calif., and Irene Neufeld of Winnipeg. Another was elected to Board of Christian Literature.

A resolution on inter-Mennonite relations drew several responses from the floor which underscored that Mennonite Brethren do not want to seek closer links with other Mennonites on the basis of common Anabaptist convictions unless it is an "evangelical Anabaptism." A statement written by General Conference Mennonites and the Mennonite Church and accepted at their 1983 assembly in Bethlehem, Pa., was criticized by the spokesmen as not showing such evangelical concern.

Finances did not pose a great problem to the Reedley convention, though a budget was presented which expects $16.6 million from the 40,000-member conference during the next triennium, about 95 percent of that to be spent on overseas missions and the operation of the Biblical Seminary in Fresno, Calif.
*Harold Jantz*

## *Mennonite Indian leaders welcome local leadership*

Newton, Kan. (GCMC)—Daniel Schirmer personifies the desire of the Mennonite Indian Leaders Council to have Native Americans at the helm of their work. Ordained 50 years ago, Daniel and his wife, the late Amy Talesnemptewa Schirmer, worked as missionaries in Arizona and Montana. Daniel was honored at this year's annual meeting of MILC, held in Arizona in October. All five Hopi churches in the area hosted the event.

Furthering this emphasis on local leadership, Elmer Myron was named successor to Pearl Janzen as staff person for the Arizona congregations. And Hopi Mission School in Kykotsmovi is searching for its first full-time Indian principal. Synthesis with Native American

*continued on next page*

**Two members of the San Antonio** (Texas) voluntary service unit participated in a pilgrimage for peace on bicycle to the Pantex nuclear weapons plant near Amarillo, Texas. Kenton Swartley of Elkhart, Ind., and Neil Amstutz of Hesston, Kan., were among seven bicyclists from the local Fellowship of Reconciliation group who departed July 29 on the 550-mile trip. The six-day trek culminated in a non-violent protest for nuclear disarmament. About 300 people took part in the action.

**The Oral Roberts Evangelistic Association** has channeled nearly $50 million to the City of Faith, its medical complex in Tulsa, Okla., since 1981. But, according to *Christianity Today* (Aug. 10), patient revenue has fallen short of operating expenses by $29 million. In recent months the medical center has laid off 244 of its 907 employees. The evangelistic association has cut its 500-person staff by more than 20 percent. According to recent Arbitron ratings, Roberts' television audience has dropped from 4.35 million in 1981 to about 2.5 million today.

**"We prayed five years** for Spanish leadership," says Betty Hochstetler of her congregation, Grace Mennonite Church in Chicago. In September 1983, Miguel Espindola and Marco Guete came to share that ministry. Two months later a group of Hispanics began meeting in Grace Church. A year later attendance is between 20 and 30; weekly offerings are between $100 and $130. "We want to be self-supporting in five years," says Guete. Last May the new church, Comunidad de Fe (Community of Faith), baptized four new members. Growth is promising in this neighborhood where 35,000 people inhabit one square mile.

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culture is also evidenced in Cheyenne tunes being used increasingly in worship, and in the title of (chairman) Willis Busenitz's address, "Opening Smoke Signals."

MILC brings together Arapaho, Northern and Southern Cheyenne and Hopi Mennonites. Reports come in from congregations. For example, Rose Birdshead reported that Zion Mennonite Church, Canton, Okla., is now self-supporting and has funds which can be used for a Mennonite Voluntary Service worker.

Major concern continues to focus on alcoholism, and the Hopi Alcoholism Rehabilitation Program is one place where that is acted on, supported by grants and private donations. Budget shortfalls have caused the Commission on Home Ministries to cut back on allotted amounts to HARP and to the Hopi Mission School as well as across the board. In the case of the school, local ownership is desired but is complicated. The school cannot raise tuition as 75 percent of the children attending fall below the poverty line. The school's support base, on the other hand, is newly strengthened by the participation of Baptists.

Additionally, there is potential strength in a new and major intent to cooperate on an inter-Mennonite basis. People from Native Ministries of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and representatives of the Mennonite Church were present at the MILC meetings.

*Daniel Schirmer, retired missionary to Native Americans, was ordained in 1934. Marking that 50th anniversary, he preaches at the annual Mennonite Indian Leaders Council.*

## 'Christian sexual beings in relationship' conference held at AMBS

Elkhart, Ind. (AMBS)—Speeches, storytelling, worship and small group process were part of the "Christian sexual beings in relationship" conference Oct. 4-5 at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

The conference was intended to help the seminary community address matters ranging from interpersonal dynamics on campus to normative theological and ethical standards on human sexuality.

Tom Meyers and Elsie Steelberg helped people gain a critical awareness of the positive and negative ways in which Christians have been influenced by the sexual trends of the past 25 years.

Meyers, professor of sociology at Goshen (Ind.) College, said the rapid change in sexual experimentation outside of marriage in American society can be traced, in part, to changes in the authority of family and community. In the mid-20th century, he said, one's identity comes more from job and peers than from the family or social and religious community to which one belongs.

Meyers said sex behavior in humans is learned through the social process; it is not instinctive. Rather than primarily form or technique, the intimate expression in sexual activity represents communication, he said. The word "intercourse," he said, belongs to communication vocabulary.

Elsie Steelberg, a practicing psychiatrist and member of the inter-Mennonite Task Force on Human Sexuality, said it is important to remember that "we are all sexual beings." Sexuality, she said, is not the same as sexual activity.

Steelberg finds in friendship both the limits and freedom of how people can relate in brother-sister or male-female relationships. She said in the last two years she has learned "how a word or a hug can comfort."

Robin Scroggs, professor of New Testament at Chicago Theological Seminary, said intimacy "is one thing the New Testament is short on."

The theological rationale for human relationships, however, he said, points to the possibility for intimacy. Scroggs sees the biblical equality of male and female as a transformation that comes into a distorted world. The transformation of self, he said, makes possible a "relating sexually that doesn't involve domination and control."

Nancy Kerr, a student and instructor at AMBS, concluded the formal presentations with the topic "Friendship, Intimacy and Sexuality." Female and male, she said, placed on a normal distribution curve, are more alike than different. "We do need touch to live," she said. "Some more, some less." She added, "We don't need intercourse to stay alive."

We do need to share hearts and minds and spirits intimately, although genital intercourse belongs nowhere except in marriage, she said. Self-disclosure with God and with friends fulfills the intimacy needs for being fully human.

Discussion groups during the two-day conference provided a context for sharing and appropriating learnings. A listening committee helped process the learning and questions. Participants expressed appreciation that the conference broke a broad silence on sexual issues in the church.

**Three new Mennonite Voluntary Service** units have been approved for Winnipeg, Cleveland and San Francisco. Bethel Mennonite Church initiated the idea of a unit in Winnipeg. It hopes to place four unit members by January in work with refugees, peace education and day care. Lee Heights Community Church agreed to sponsor a unit in Cleveland. Volunteers are needed for each of the unit's program areas—community organization, tutoring and housing rehabilitation. The San Francisco MVS unit was initiated by Mark Lawson and Sharon Heath, who had served with MVS in Arvada, Colo.

**Mennonite Central Committee** offers ideas for helping the poor this Christmas. SELFHELP Crafts is a marketing outlet for skilled craftspeople in many developing countries. The goal of this program is to help people earn a living through production and sales of traditional crafts. MCC Cash Projects have become another avenue for expressing the Christmas spirit. One church group hangs paper Christmas ornaments on a tree with cash project suggestions. People select an ornament (project) and send a gift to that specific MCC project. Write MCC, 21 S. 12th St., Akron, PA 17501, for information.

**Zion Mennonite Church,** Swift Current, Sask., agreed recently to begin a second General Conference congregation in Swift Current. The majority of members voted to release a group of members to begin the new fellowship.

# RECORd

## MINISTERS

*Erwin Cornelsen* has resigned as associate minister at Sherbrooke Church, Vancouver.

*Henry* and *Helen Dueck* have resigned as co-pastors at Charleswood Church, Winnipeg, effective in 1985.

*Jim Egli* became pastor at Flanagan (Ill.) Church in September.

*Steve Estes* became pastor at Boynton Church, Hopedale, Ill., Nov. 1. He graduated in May from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind.

*Dennis Friesen* has become assistant minister at Martensville (Sask.) Church.

*John Friesen* has resigned as leading minister at Zoar Church, Langham, Sask., effective summer 1985.

*Henry Funk* has resigned as leading minister at North Star Church, Drake, Sask., effective in 1985.

*Gary Giesbrecht* has become leading minister at Crystal City (Man.) Church.

*Titus* and *Karen Guenther* have become youth workers for the Conference of the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario.

*Ray* and *Marilyn Hamm* will become leading ministers at Altona (Man.) Church in 1985.

*Milton Harder* has resigned as pastor at Grace Church, Lansdale, Pa., effective Nov. 30. He previously served as pastor at South Seattle Church and chaplain/counselor of the Salvation Army Adult Rehabilitation Center in Seattle.

*Richard Kauenhofen* has become assistant to the minister at North Kildonan Church, Winnipeg.

*Edward J. Kauffman* became pastor at Eighth Street Church, Goshen, Ind., in June.

*Epps*

*Russell Mast* has become interim pastor at Oak Grove Church, Smithville, Ohio, for up to a year.

*Nevin Miller* will continue as interim pastor at Carlock/North Danvers (Ill.) churches into 1985.

*Jim Mohr* has become pastor at First Church, Wadsworth, Ohio.

*Ruth Naylor* has become associate pastor at First Church, Bluffton, Ohio.

*Don Nofziger* became pastor at Neil Avenue Church, Columbus, Ohio, on Aug. 19.

*Harold Nussbaum* became pastor at Casselton (N.D.) Church on Sept. 30. He will also be pastor at Fargo-Moorhead Fellowship, Fargo, N.D.

*Jerry Nussbaum* will become youth minister in the Central District east Jan. 1, 1985.

*Bruno Penner* became pastor at Bethel Church, Fortuna, Mo., on Aug. 19.

*David Peters* has become leading minister at Bethany Church, Watrous, Sask.

*Anna Rehan* has resigned as part-time youth minister at Sherbrooke Church, Vancouver, to become youth worker for the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan in the spring of 1985.

*Henry Reimer* has become leading minister at First Church, Saskatoon.

*Steve Ropp* became youth minister in the Central District west July 1.

*Norman Voth* has become pastor at Church of the Way, Granisle, B.C.

*Joel* and *Brenda Wiebe* have become youth ministers at Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church.

*Ralph Wischnewski* was ordained, and *Peter Bartel* was installed as minister at First Church, Winnipeg, Oct. 14. Bartel previously served at Grace Church, Brandon, Man., for seven years.

## WORKERS

*Helen Alderfer* has resigned as editor of *On The Line*, a two-color monthly published for 9- to 14-year-olds by the Mennonite Church and the General Conference. Alderfer was the magazine's first editor, serving since 1970. *Virginia Hostetler* has been named to replace her as editor.

*Ed* and *Norilynn Epp*, Bethel Church, Winnipeg, have begun two-year MCC terms in Shenyang, China, teaching English as a second language. Both have bachelor's degrees in education from the University of Winnipeg. Ed is the son of Fred and Irma Epp of Winnipeg. Norilynn's parents are Jake and Olga Regehr of Winnipeg.

*Freda Friesen*, Hesston (Kan.) College Church, has joined the secretarial staff of the Commission on Education.

*Delia Graber*, Bethel College Church, North Newton, Kan., has joined the secretarial staff of the Commission on Education.

*Elmer* and *Leola Wiens*, Hoffnungsau Church, Inman, Kan., began a two-year Mennonite Voluntary Service term Sept. 1 as senior service workers with Community Care Services in Reedley, Calif. Both have farming experience. Their pictures appeared in the Nov. 6 issue.

# mission: **city**

**This, too, is Africa.**

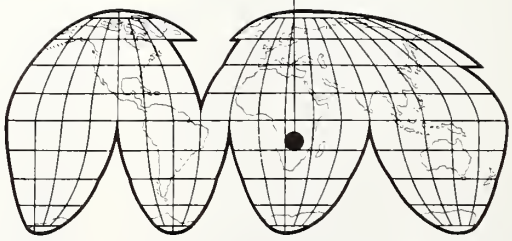
It's not all rain forest or exotic wildlife. Africa is teeming cities, too. Huge cities of rapid change. Millions of people are moving into these urban areas. People with real needs.

For many, the city is a strange new world far from familiar villages, family and the home church.

Now more than ever, a Christian witness and fellowship are needed for the lonely, the lost and those looking for hope.

Churches are being planted. COM is there as part of the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission team, working with national believers in Kinshasa, Kananga, Maseru and Gaborone. Our missionaries are assisting in urban Africa as God continues to grow His church.

**Join the mission to the city. Support COM.**



**Commission on Overseas Mission**
General Conference Mennonite Church
722 Main Street, P.O. Box 347
Newton, Kansas 67114

600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4

## Computer response surprises

*The Mennonite* has been a favorite of mine since before my seminary days. Several years ago two strokes took me out of circulation and it is only now that I am beginning to regain some confidence in my now one-handed ability with a limited voice. My stroke took my voice and my right side, but not my mind.

Just recently I acquired a computer to assist me in regaining some of my skills. As a former pastor, teacher, social worker and librarian, I am aware how important communication is to effective living. Needless to say, I was somewhat taken aback by the coolness with which the articles on computers in the church (July 17 and 31 issues) have been received. Can we not accept progress in communications technology the same as we accept progress in other aspects of life? The computer is only a tool. It can only do a whole lot faster the things that a human can do. It has no mind of its own.

While still a novice at the machine, I am beginning to see all kinds of possibilities for its use in my personal life as well as for the volunteer work I do at church and at our local hospital. Alone it does nothing. Together we create words and useful thoughts.

As Christian brothers and sisters we owe it to each other to use what the world has for the building of God's church. *Arthur D. Dick, 1361 Majestic Drive, Burlington, ON L7M 1G4*

Oct. 5

## More on jury duty

I can understand Elsie Epp's reluctance to get involved in jury duty (Sept. 25 issue) because of her status as a member of a pastoral team. However, I am profoundly disturbed by the implication that a Mennonite cannot, in good conscience, become involved in our legal system as a juror. It seems the author is intimating that our entire legal system is evil from the ground up. In particular, I fail to understand how a juror can only determine guilt. In other examples jurors have determined innocence.

As a law student, I am painfully aware of the deficiencies of our legal system. But I feel the only way to begin to remedy this situation is to work within the system and influence it as best I can, rather than condemning the whole thing outright. This latter approach smacks of the prevalent Mennonite way of viewing all things in black and white terms and prohibiting any association with any "worldly" thing. Flawed as it may be, our legal system is preferable to allowing our lives to be governed by the arbitrary and thus easily abused powers of legislators or the police. The injustices that would be perpetrated by such a system would undoubtedly be found to be unacceptable to us all.

For these reasons I feel Mennonites have a responsibility to work within the existing legal system as jurors, lawyers and judges and thereby bring a positive influence to bear on it. *Herb Rempel, 374 Hawthorne Ave., Winnipeg, MB R2G 0H5*

Oct. 9

## Could the Pope be a brother?

I continue to enjoy *The Mennonite*. The articles are informative, inspirational and challenging. But I was disturbed by "Mennonites React to Pope's Visit in British Columbia" (Oct. 9 issue).

When will we learn to accept and not condemn and exclude? Are we God? Who is to say that the Pope is not my Christian brother? One can have beautiful fellowship with believers of the Catholic church. (Not all Mennonites are truly committed Christians.) Have we not learned from our Mennonite history where we refused to accept even someone from another Mennonite denomination?

I applaud the stand that ministers Paul Boschman and John Dyck of Abbotsford took. Are we not to show love and acceptance to all people—believers and unbelievers, Catholics and Protestants?

I close with a quote from Bernie Wiebe's editorial of Oct. 9. "He became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). *Helen Wiens, 3691 Rees Road, Richmond, BC V6X 2S4*

Oct. 22

## We are moving

We would like to inform *The Mennonite* and our many friends and relatives in Canada and elsewhere about our move from our home in Carman into a home for retired people.

Old address: D. D. and Susan Klassen, *Box 417, Carman, MB R0G 0J0.*

New address: D. D. and Susan Klassen, *Box 109, Boyne Towers, 120 Fourth Avenue S. W., Room 109, Carman, MB R0G 0J0, phone (204) 745-3578.*

We greet you all with Hebrews 13:14: "For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come" (NIV). The Lord Jesus calls this coming city "my Father's house" (John 14:1). And the apostle John describes it in detail in two long chapters (Revelation 21-22).

With every move from place to place the truth of the songwriter becomes real: "This world is not my home."

Oct. 24


***MMA's IRA helps you . . . and others, too***

MMA's Individual Retirement Annuity (IRA) brings tax and retirement savings. And more:

***Caring*** Investments in harmony with Mennonite beliefs and practices.

***Sharing*** Small percentage of gross earnings goes to help others in the church.

Save and earn for the future . . . with a first-year rate of 10% for IRA's begun ***before December 31, 1984.***

For more information or to start your IRA, call toll-free 800-348-7468; or (219) 533-9511, collect in Indiana.

Mennonite Mutual Aid

# The 1920s emigration from Russia

*Gerhard Lohrenz*

At the beginning of the 20th century the more than 100,000 Mennonites in Russia were well-established throughout the Ukraine and the Caucasian region and from there eastward deep into Siberia. Their larger settlements usually had their own administration, schools, benevolent establishments, churches and in many places substantial industry and trading organizations. Their houses were well-kept and surrounded by flower gardens, shade trees and fruit gardens.

The villagers were a closely knit group, like a large family. Everybody knew everybody. Practically all our young people who graduated from Russian or German universities as medical doctors, dentists, engineers, etc. returned to our settlements because nowhere in the world could they feel more at home than they did here.

Many of our people had relatives in North America, and there was some correspondence. Occasionally a family from America visited in our villages. Some of our people traveled to America. Our neighbor, Mr. Enns, had been there twice, and a Mr. Peter Friesen had also been there. They reported favorably about America, but no one spoke of moving. Mr. Friesen told me that so far as social life was concerned, he would never want to live in America.

*A worship service was held by some of the emigrants at the train station in Riga.*

But then the time came where all this changed.

World War I broke out in 1914. This changed our situation overnight. The Germans suddenly were the national enemies. Some of the Russian papers began a vicious slander against the 2 million Russian citizens of German background. While the sons of these Russo-German citizens were dying on the front for "Mother Russia," unreasonable restrictions were forced on their families at home.

This forced our people to rethink their situation. Voices began saying that Russia was not our home after all. We never would be accepted unless we were willing to give up our faith, our language, our way of life and intermarry with our neighbors to the point of losing our identity. Very few were willing even to consider this. The majority hoped for the end of hostilities and for all to be as before.

The war ended and the revolution began. Bloodshed became the order of the day. The many estate owners and other well-to-do people were driven from their homes. Where could they start anew? Their eyes turned to America.

The existing Mennonite Commission for Church Affairs (KFK) already in 1917 called a congress of all Mennonites in Orloff, Molotschna. Our leaders saw no future in the new Russia. A mass emigration seemed to be the only alternative. Concrete actions were taken in December 1919 when from the Molotschna four men known as the Study Commission were elected to go to Western Europe and North America to report on conditions in Russia and seek means and ways to exit the country.

Our brotherhood wisely set up two other organizations for the task of economic reconstruction. The Association of Citizens of Dutch Extraction, with its headquarters in Kharkov, and the All Russian Mennonite Agricultural Union, with headquarters in Moscow, in 1922 were given a charter by the authorities.

Officially these organizations worked for reconstruction, but unofficially they prepared for a mass emigration. They requested from the government and received a permit for the emigration of homeless and destitute Mennonites (April 1922). They also kept in contact with the Study Commission, a dangerous thing to do since the Soviets would have taken a dim view of that organization.

The Study Commission received sympathy for the conditions in Russia and found support in Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and Canada. It became evident that Canada was the only country that might accept the homeless of Russia. But even in

"Strength for Tomorrow" is an emergency appeal of FREEMAN JUNIOR COLLEGE, Freeman, SD; approved by the General Conference Mennonite Church

Spring floods, a late planting season and early frost, combined with a fluctuating farm economy, have created unstable economic conditions for FJC's local agriculture-based constituency.

With the help of volunteers across the nation, FJC encourages congregations and individuals to pledge financial aid for growth and development. Further information will follow through bulletin inserts and churchwide contacts.

FJC seeks your support today for continued strength tomorrow.

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Freeman Junior College offers two years of Christian Higher Education from a Mennonite perspective, which blends Biblical teachings with Liberal Arts programs and with Career Vocational programs, equipping students for service to Christ and the world.

Canada serious barriers existed for such an immigration. A group of unselfish men, foremost among them was the Elder David Toews, succeeded in removing these barriers. They also persuaded the Canadian Pacific Railway to bring these immigrants to Canada on credit (it ran into millions of dollars).

In Russia new difficulties arose. There was a famine during which about 5 million citizens died. About 600 Mennonites starved to death, but thousands would have died had it not been for the help from America and Holland. Then a typhus epidemic swept through the country, carrying millions to their graves, among these many Mennonites. Economically the country was on the brink of ruin.

But finally everything was ready for the first group to emigrate. In early July 1923 a group of 750 people left by train from Chortitza. Friend parted from friend, brother from brother and parents from their children. It was heartrending.

At the Latvian boundary about 10 percent did not pass the final medical exam. Generously the German government, itself in great difficulties, assumed temporary responsibility for these rejectees.

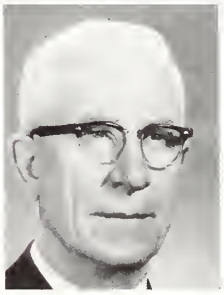
*A double wedding—Kornelius Kroeker to Elisabeth Jansen and Hans Kroeker to Tina Jansen—held in 1920 at Spat, Krim, in Russia, reflects some of the good times.*

They were brought to Lechfeld.

The first train of newcomers from Russia arrived in Rosthern, Sask., on July 21, 1923. Eventually a total of 20,201 people moved to Canada from Russia by 1930. The highest annual totals were 5,048 in 1924 and 5,940 in 1926 (Epp, *Mennonites in Canada, 1920-1940*, p. 178). By 1930 only 305 immigrants arrived in Canada. The Soviet door was closing, and the days of opportunity for entering Canada were also nearing an end.

The 272 new immigrant settlement districts in Ontario (17), Manitoba (89), Saskatchewan (108), Alberta (43) and British Columbia (15) resulted in doubling the number of Mennonite churches in Canada from 1920 to 1940. The changes initiated through this mass transfusion of newer Mennonites into Canada resulted in both unifying changes and disrupting changes which can be seen and felt to this day. Similarly, the Mennonite commitment to a costly discipleship was infused constructively but also confusedly with consequences that can be seen and felt today.

*Some of the emigrants board a train en route to a new world.*



*Gerhard Lohrenz, 110-165 Donwood Drive, Winnipeg, MB R2G 2H9, was part of the 1920s immigration to Canada and is a well-known Mennonite educator, church leader, writer and historian.*

# A backward glance at Perspective '84

*Dorothy Nickel Friesen*

"Perspective '84 meant and still means a lot to me."

"I'm glad for the opportunity to put my response in writing."

Young adults still join in a hearty chorus of support for Perspective '84, a first-of-a kind conference for young adults held in Minneapolis last February. A follow-up questionnaire was sent six weeks later to approximately 60 randomly selected people. Almost 30 responded.

Perspective '84 was "great," "inspiring," "empowering," a "thought-provoking experience," a "much needed break." It was "important for us 'young adult fringe' folks because the church was involved in confronting *our* issues."

"My commitment to the church was reaffirmed in that such an event could be 'officially' sponsored by the church."

"It was nice to get together with other believers searching for a deeper meaning of God. . . ."

It was "a heartening experience, a spiritually strong celebration. . . ."

Comments to the statement "Perspective '84 was . . ." ranged from the intensely personal, "It caused me to recognize, reflect upon and react to issues that the church body faces day after day and inspired me to look more closely and find out what I could do," to the overarching, "It was a great idea and success."

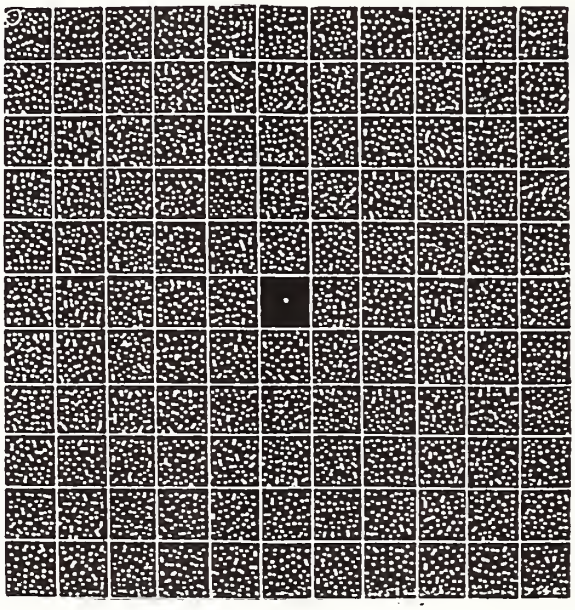
Almost all respondents said they would never forget "the liberating ideas shared by Virginia and Perry."

"One idea that shook me up was Mollenkott's statement about how we would make the rules for the world if we didn't know whether we would be born into it black or white, male or female, able or disabled, homosexual or heterosexual." Her "thundering," one person stated, forced everyone to "listen hard."

"Even though we (young adults) may be more open to new ideas and be more accepting on some of today's issues (homosexuality, divorce, etc.), we are thinking seriously about them."

A woman from Saskatchewan wrote, "The controversial nature of some issues didn't bother me. It got me thinking and made me want to pray and study and come to my own conclusions. To grow in our faith we need to be challenged."

An Ontario male said, "I don't think my home church would like Virginia's reference to homosexual behavior as OK. However, it is good and proper for me to be challenged in love even if I don't agree with her. . . . It is an insecure faith that cannot listen to differences."



*On display at Perspective '84 was this graph. The dot in the center represents the total firepower of World War II. The other dots represent the combined firepower of today's existing nuclear weapons. The circle of 3 dots at the top left represents the firepower of one Poseidon submarine.*

"If I could tell my church one thing about Perspective '84, it would be, 'the status quo must go!' My home church hasn't changed or grown much in the past 15 years . . . it's become smaller. We need to find creative, practical, realistic ways of implementing Perry Yoder's statement, which is in danger of remaining only a catchy slogan with a radical ring to it."

A Chicago woman wrote, "From the outset I felt affirmed by Perry's and Virginia's words. I resonated with them. Then I began to accept their challenges at a personal level—not to write off those who have trouble accepting my homosexual friends or black friends and to work for honesty and quality in all my relationships."

One person accused Mollenkott of stepping outside the boundaries of biblical interpretation. Another questioned Yoder's contention that salvation with a "spiritual" focus was a minority reading of the New Testament.

Some general responses were, "My faith was strengthened by the diversity and the unity of the participants. . . ." "My faith was strengthened by the use of inclusive language. It freed me to celebrate authentically, allowed me to affirm a God and a church community committed to justice." "To know I have partners in hope in Vancouver, Pennsylvania, Winnipeg and California is comforting."

The Sunday morning worship and communion service was a distinctive highlight. "I felt a spirit of acceptance and unity. After three hours of worship no one wanted to leave that place. I had never experienced that before (and perhaps never will again)."

Should there be another young adult conference? Yes, yes, yes! "Why didn't we do this earlier? There are many adults crying out to the church for answers. More such conferences would create a network for communication among young adult Christians. We all need a lot of support."

"I would love to attend a conference like this several times a year."

It is evident from the questionnaires that Perspective '84 was a positive Christian experience. It shocked some that controversial issues were discussed from the podium, but these young adults perceived that as taking them seriously. They had not come for pablum. Some moved for the first time from a "milk" to a "meat" spirituality.

*Dorothy Nickel Friesen, 220 S. Eighth Street, Manhattan, KS 66502, did the follow-up research on Perspective '84.*

# MEDITATION

## World conference in Jerusalem

A Strasbourg it was when Hezekiah ascended the throne to reign as king of Judah. There was removing of the wrong, renewing what needed mending, refilling what had stood empty so long, returning to laws forgotten, neglected, and rejoicing in united worship.

A Strasbourg it was. It had been so long since God's people had gathered in large numbers to celebrate the passover together. The invitation had gone out throughout the cities of Israel and Judah, "Come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem. Come to keep the passover."

Not all the invited came. How could they know the personal cost of renewal in their staying away? Many came. "A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem."

A celebration it was. Always it is a celebration when our sins are taken away. First of all was the sin offering, and then followed the feasting, the singing, the worship, the praising. What a time they had!

So good was the fellowship together before God that the entire assembly agreed to celebrate a second portion of seven days. "There was great joy . . . not since the days of Solomon had there been anything like it. The priests and Levites blessed the people and God heard them, for their prayer reached heaven, his holy dwelling place."

Was it so in Strasbourg, France? I don't know. I couldn't be there. But I am expecting waves of joy and out of this joy a power toward change.

A power toward change evolved from the joy at Jerusalem. The 14 days of celebration over, the celebrants went out smashing and destroying what stood in the way of true worship of God and obedience to him.

Come in your joy, all you who were at Strasbourg. Come and help us to worship more intimately, more wholly, the God and Lord of us all.

*Joanna S. Andres*

## A call to bread

Rose Lambert of Illinois, director of an orphanage in Hadjin, Turkey, in the first decade of this century, wrote of the poverty of the people there. She said the cry of the people was for bread, salt and soap. This illustrates the spiritual needs of the Christian. We need Jesus, the bread of life; Jesus wants us by our living example to be the salt of the earth; and we surely need the cleansing power that is even greater than soap. In Jeremiah 2:22 we read, ". . . though thou take thee much soap yet is thy iniquity marked before me, saith the Lord God" (KJV). In 1 John 1:7 we read, "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (KJV).

It was during this same decade that Rose Lambert's sister, Norah Lambert, went to Turkey to help in the work. She said that at the age of 14 she felt the call of God to do mission work. She spent some time at Goshen (Ind.) College and then at Toronto Bible College. I wonder if young people in their early teens feel the call of God today. If not, is it because there are so many other calls, or is it that we ministers have not sufficiently cooperated with the Lord in extending the call?

*Ward W. Shelly*

# CONTENTS

This issue appears at Thanksgiving time in the United States. What is there to be grateful for?

We aren't printing a series of "please, be thankful" articles. Instead, you will find articles about who we are and who we can become.

When we consider the potential God created into each person on earth, it must move us toward humility. Genuine humility moves us to pray, "Thy will be done." Whenever we can do that sincerely, it reflects at least a beginning of gratitude.

This year we are hoping that this season leads us toward humility. Out of it, we know, will come thanksgiving.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THE MENNONITE

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# editorial

## *Thank God for names*

"I was raised in a fine Christian family. There were six boys, and my parents were wonderful people. They took us to church several times on Sunday and often during the week. We had a family altar and we prayed every day. The Bible was the center of our life. But . . . I was 12 years old before I realized that my father knew my name.

"He was a hard man to please. We all did chores around the house, but they were never done to please him. Most of his conversation consisted of, 'You didn't cut the lawn right' or, 'You left the basement door open' or, 'You forgot to cut the wood.'

"I thought I was just one of his six sons, but when I was 12 years old he suddenly called me by name in the middle of a weeding project. 'Walter,' he said, 'you have left a lot of those weeds.' I was so thrilled that he knew my name. I thought I was just number 3. Suddenly I had worth as a person" (Bruce Larson, *There's a Lot More to Health Than Not Being Sick*).

Thank God, you and I have names. Our world tries to put us into categories and then to classify us with numbers. It is hard to feel significant when all you are asked for is your number. I believe it's not totally coincidental that the initials for Canada's Social Insurance Number (counterpart to the U.S. Social Security Number) spell SIN. Giving numbers to people, instead of dignity, is sin.

But the pressure toward depersonalization grows. Military instructors teach gunners and other weapons handlers to destroy "targets, enemies, 'commies.' " Rarely are they told these are men, women and children like our own families. Schools ask for ID numbers and get upset when you insist that you have a name. Banks don't care much for names, provided you can give them the proper codes.

Yes, we also do it in church. Offering envelopes have numbers with a tight security about who they belong to. We feel better hearing that over 2 billion people on this planet have not personally been met by Christian people than to be told that Ruth and Philip, who we talked with last week, have never been spoken to about Jesus Christ.

Thank God, you and I have names. Our parents may have given them to us with little thought for their meaning (I doubt I was named "Bernhard" because it means "brave as a bear"). They are easily called "dog tags." But they do set us apart.

Some say animals have environments, people have a world. God created the first people with a special dignity. They were given charge to name other created things. That gave all of God's creation a special significance.

Two Bible stories relate directly to the issue of names.

In Mark 5 Jesus meets the Gerasene demoniac and asks his name (v. 9a). He replies, "My name is Legion; for we are many" (v. 9b). Yes, it likely refers in part to the many demons possessing him. But it is an apt description of the non-people all over the world. Their name is Legion because they are so many. They are statistics to be used for research and reports.

In John 20 the resurrected Jesus sees a weeping Mary—heartbroken because her Lord had been crucified and now even his corpse was gone. Jesus said to her, "Mary" (v. 16a) and all her hopes and prayers suddenly came alive. No dead body, no rock, no computer could speak her name like Jesus had often spoken it. He who had cast out her demons and helped her find wholeness addressed her with holy dignity.

Because of hearing her name spoken as only Jesus could speak it, Mary Magdalene could believe in a risen Lord, could believe in her own healing, and went to tell others.

Thank God for your name. Show your thanks in addressing other people by their names. There are no its or "hey, you" people. All have names. One big step to recognizing their worth in Christ is to call people by their names. *Bernie Wiebe*

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

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# A hopeful call

Introduction. *Although we make use of the Old Testament analogy of Israel as the wife of Yahweh—an analogy which is found in a number of the prophetic books—this does not mean that the prophets thought of God as literally male. They make use of other analogies which attribute female characteristics to the God of Israel.*

*There is a myth in many churches—including Mennonite—that suggests humor is without value and conveys nothing of truth. On the contrary, humor can sometimes present truth in powerful ways. I believe Jesus understood that and demonstrated it in some of his teachings, particularly the parables. Although we may have taken liberties with the story of Ezekiel and his dry bones, I do not believe we have detracted from its truth. If we have, certainly it is not intended. At no significant point have we departed from the biblical narrative.*

*Our text is Ezekiel 37:1-14, but this dialogue sermon is also based on other portions of Ezekiel. The sermon was presented by Frank G. Ward and Harley Marshall for the Sunday worship of the Mennonite Health Association on March 25 at Kansas City. The overall theme for the MHA convention was "Celebrating Hope."*

**(Telephone rings. Ezekiel grabs for it at the very first sound, anxious to find out what has happened to him.)**

*Ezekiel:* Hello! Hello! Who's there?

*Yahweh:* Hello, Ezekiel. It's me, ol' Yahweh himself. What's the trouble? You sound a tad anxious.

*E:* Anxious? Me? Goodness no. Not anxious. Maybe petrified. Maybe scared to death. But not anxious. I wish you'd quit doing this to me. Where am I?

*Y:* Well, let's try to deal calmly with things. One at a time. We've got three issues here, right? (1) You're petrified but not anxious. (2) You wish I'd quit doing something to you, whatever *that* is. And (3) you want to know where you are, right?

*E:* Will you quit goofing off? I'm telling you, my stomach can't take this sudden moving around. One minute I'm one place and the next thing I know I'm someplace else. People are starting to talk about me. *I'm* starting to talk about me.

*Y:* Come on, it's not that bad.

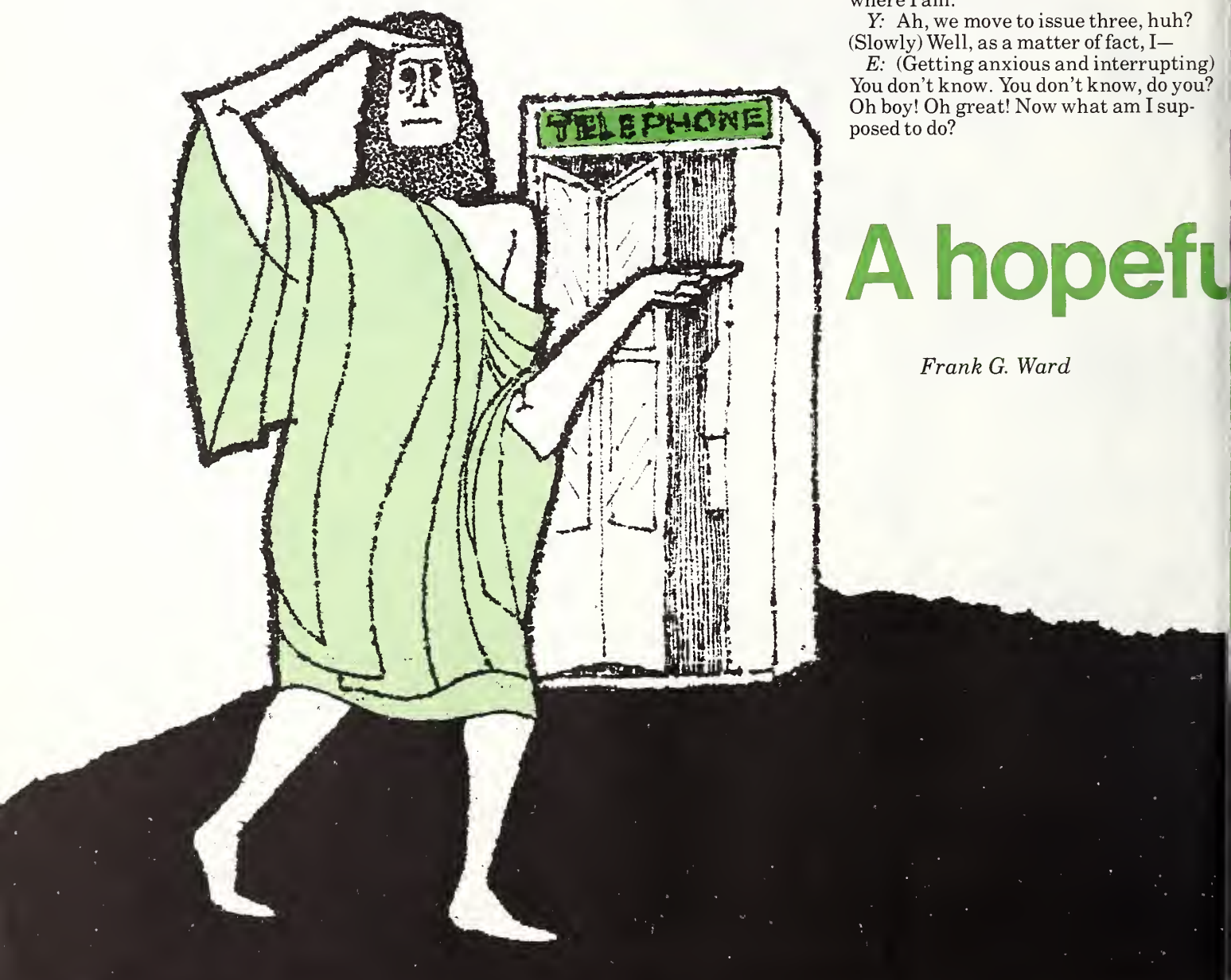
*E:* Not bad? I don't know why I ever agreed to work for you in the first place. I should have known better from that very first vision. Animals like I never saw even in my nightmares. Wheels inside of wheels. You really get off on that stuff, don't you?

*Y:* Well, I was trying to get your attention.

*E:* Look, I'm not going to get into an argument about visions. Just tell me where I am.

*Y:* Ah, we move to issue three, huh? (Slowly) Well, as a matter of fact, I—

*E:* (Getting anxious and interrupting) You don't know. You don't know, do you? Oh boy! Oh great! Now what am I supposed to do?




# A hopefu

*Frank G. Ward*

*Y:* Slow down, son, slow down. Trust me. I haven't failed you yet, have I? Listen, why don't you describe the place to me?

*E:* Describe it? I'm in a big box, that's all I know.

*Y:* No, no, that's a telephone booth. Not to worry. What's outside?

*E:* Outside?

*Y:* Do we have a bad connection? Outside. Outside of the big box. What do you see outside of the big box?

*E:* Nothing. Just a valley. (Squints eyes) It's so bright, it's hard to see. It's just a desert valley . . . no trees . . . not even a blade of grass.

*Y:* Oh yeah, OK, now we're getting somewhere. Look more carefully, Zeke. What do you see?

*E:* I told you before . . . nothing. Just . . . like white sand. It's so bright I . . . Oh, holy mackerel! Good grief. Ahh, now what did you do *that* for?

*Y:* (Smiling with satisfaction) What's wrong, Zeke? What do you see?

*E:* Bones . . . dry, white bones. As far as I can see, nothing but bones. Millions of them . . . maybe billions.

*Y:* Actually just 121,000. I didn't think I needed overkill.

*E:* Come on, what are you trying to do? This is gross. Take me someplace else.

call

*"Teach? By sticking me out here in the midst of a bunch of broken up skeletons? Teach me what?"*

*Y:* What kind of bones are they, Ezekiel?

*E:* (Repulsed by the scene) I don't know. I'm not an expert on bleached bones. I wouldn't know a hamster's from a Brontosaurus'. . . . (Hushed and in awe now) They're . . . they're human bones, aren't they? Oh gee . . . now I can see them; it's like an ocean of skeletons . . . skulls . . . ribs . . . backbones and shoulder blades and wishbones and leg—

*Y:* (Interrupting) Wishbones? Couldn't be, I only put those in turkeys and chickens and things like that.

*E:* I don't care. This is creepy. What are you trying to do to me?

*Y:* For crying out loud, Zeke, will you try not to be so squeamish? It's not like I'm asking you to take them home and make pets of them. This is important. I'm trying to teach you something.

*E:* Teach? By sticking me out here in the midst of a bunch of broken up skeletons? Teach me what? Why can't you just tell me? You know—I say this with all due respect; we've been together quite a while now—sometimes you seem a little weird.

*Y:* *Me* weird? What about you? You're the guy that sees visions, gets struck dumb, lays on your side for 190 days. . . .

*E:* (So frustrated he is almost speechless) Me? Me? Why . . . how can you . . . you *told* me to do that.

*Y:* (Serenely) Well, you didn't have to.

*E:* Oh for . . . I *did*, I *did* have to. That's just the point. Ahh, what's the use? You're hopeless.

*Y:* Au contraire, Zeke, you're hopeless.

*E:* Now what do you mean by that?

*Y:* All in good time, son, all in good time. Right now I want you to do something for me.

*E:* (Peeved) What?

*Y:* I . . . I want you to speak to the bones.

*E:* You want . . . you want me to *what*?

*Y:* I want you to prophesy to all those bones.

*E:* But that's . . . that's insane. How can I address . . . bones? I've had reluctant audiences before, but this is ridiculous.

*Y:* (Sternly) Ezekiel.

*E:* (Sighs)

*Y:* It isn't difficult. I'm not asking you to lie on your side for 190 days. Just say, "O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord."

*E:* (Draws a deep breath, then feebly) O dry . . . It's no use, I can't do it.

*Y:* (More gently) Go ahead; that wasn't bad. "O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord."

*E:* (Quickly) O dry bones hear the word of the Lord.

*Y:* Not bad, but get a little more pizzazz into it. These are dry bones we got here, not a collection of earthworms. If we're going to pull this off, we've got to put some heart in it. Hey, now there's a pun . . . "some heart in it." (Laughs)

*E:* I don't get it.

*Y:* You will, just wait. (Laughs again) All right, go ahead now.

*E:* I can't believe this. (With a little force) O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.

*Y:* Behold, I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live.

*E:* Oh brother. I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live. (He watches in awe) My God!

*Y:* What?

*E:* You should see this.

*Y:* I'm *doing* it. Why do I need to *see* it?

*E:* The noise . . . the rattling . . . I never heard or saw anything like it. The bones are moving, they're joining together. They're . . . skin is covering them. They're like real people. Millions of them . . . except . . .

*Y:* A hundred and twenty-one thousand, I told you. They're like real people except what?

*E:* This is even spookier than the skeletons. They're just lying there and . . . staring . . . like zombies.

*Y:* OK, what we need is a little more prophesying here. Ready? "Come from the four winds, O spirit, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

*E:* (This time with vigor) Come from the four winds, O spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live.

*Y:* Great. What's happening now?

*E:* Wow! They're all standing up. They're talking, smiling, laughing. Hey, listen, I'm sorry about what I said before. This is really terrific. (Pauses and thinks) But listen, I've got a better idea. I think we'd impact better on audiences if we started with the live people and then went to the bones, right? Then I can give my usual pitch about, "Thus says the Lord God: this is what I have done to Israel because of her sins in my sight." How's that sound?

*Y:* (Sighs) It sounds as if I was right before, Zeke.

*E:* What do you mean?

*Y:* (Sadly) I mean you're hopeless.

*E:* Hopeless? Listen, I did everything you ever asked me. I even prophesied to the bones and that worked. What else do you want me to do?

*Y:* Ezekiel, I don't mean you're hopeless in the sense that I can't do anything with you. You're not that far gone . . . yet. I mean you're . . . you're without hope. I can't find hope inside you, son. Oh, you obey me. But you're missing that little piece of . . . warmth inside. I don't know, maybe the fault's mine. But you've given up. Maybe you've been preaching my warnings about Israel's captivity for too long. I guess maybe if you preach judgment without a break, hope dies and despair takes over.

*E:* Well, it's *your* message. You're the one that said Israel was going to be wiped out because of her sins.

*Y:* Yeah, but Zeke, I actually think you enjoyed it.

*E:* Enjoyed it? How can you even say that? Listen, I'll tell you about being without hope. Do you remember the day Jerusalem fell? Well, do you remember what else happened on that same day?

*Y:* (Gently) Yes, I do, Zeke.

*E:* My wife died. (Pauses) And you told me—these were your very words—"Ezekiel, today I'm going to take away the delight . . . the delight of your eyes." And then you told me that I was not to show one sign of mourning. I couldn't wear the clothes of a mourner and not one single tear could I shed. That's what you told me.

*Y:* I know, Ezekiel. But do you really think I would take your wife away—cause her death—as an object lesson? Maybe you misunderstood.

*E:* You wouldn't let me mourn.

*Y:* You did mourn. I saw your tears when you were alone. I mourned too.

*E:* You did?

*Y:* Zeke, Zeke, don't you think I suffer? Where do you creatures get the idea that because I'm God I don't have pain and sorrow? Listen, the day your wife died was the day my wife died. I mourned both.

*E:* Your wife? Gee, I'm sorry. I guess I never met the missus, did I?

*"There isn't a human being on this planet I love less than any other. Some don't listen to me. Some drive me to distraction. Some aren't going to believe me. But every one of them deserves hope. And I'm going to see they have a chance if I have to die in the attempt."*

*Y:* No, no, you don't understand. I'm speaking figuratively here. Israel is my wife in a sense. I loved her just as much as you loved your wife. And if you suffered pain when she died, what do you think I felt when Jerusalem was destroyed? That was the death of Israel, my wife. Believe me, Zeke, being God is not easy. Figuring out how to be a God of judgment and a God of love at the same time can tear you apart.

*E:* So we're both hopeless.

*Y:* No, Zeke, no, we are not without hope.

*E:* What's to hope? Both our wives are dead. Mine's buried in the ground and yours is buried away in Babylon. There is no hope.

*Y:* But that's the point of the bones. I'm Hope. I'm the Hope of Israel. Israel is like you right now. Your hope is as dead as those bones out there were. You're all saying, "We're lost. We're dead. We haven't a shred of hope left." But you do. As long as I'm me, there's hope.

*E:* But hope for what? If you're hope, it doesn't seem to me to be saying much. Look what you did to my wife and to Israel. How can you do things like that if you're hope?

*Y:* Ezekiel, it isn't easy to explain. Sometimes I'm not sure I understand it. What happened to Israel she brought on herself. The way I've got the world set up, people bring judgment on themselves. . . . I don't even have to interfere for the most part.

*E:* OK, I can buy that. I'm the one who's been saying that you don't punish the kids because of the sins of the parents.

*Y:* Right. You understood that better than most of my older prophets. But maybe someday you'll also learn that sometimes people suffer just because that's the way the world works, not because they've necessarily sinned.

*E:* Boy, you can really confuse me. The more you keep talking, the more impossible hope gets as far as I'm concerned. How can you be hope when your world's so hopeless and unjust? That's like saying you work in health services because you've got a communicable disease.

*Y:* All right, you don't have to get snotty just because you don't understand my system. Somehow you creatures seem to think that just because I'm God I should keep you protected from every broken bone, every illness, every painful experience, every bad thought, every doubt—

*E:* (Interrupting) Well, why don't you? What's so wrong with that?

*Y:* I told you, it's not the way my world works. How would you guys learn? How would you grow? How would you learn sensitivity? How would you become caring creatures? I know it isn't easy. And I've seen some of you crushed and destroyed by some of the things that happen to you. But part of hope is knowing that sometimes, not always, you can come out of an experience stronger or wiser . . . changed in some way because of what you suffered.

*E:* OK, but what about the ones you said got crushed? To be perfectly honest, I don't think my wife is wiser or stronger or more sensitive than she was when she was living.

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*Y:* How do you know, Zeke? Whose world is this anyway? Mine or yours?

*E:* Well, yours, but—

*Y:* I told you, I'm hope, not the world, not religion, not words . . . me. You have to trust me on this. If you can trust me—that I'm going to bring this all out right in the end—then you've got hope.

*E:* Pie in the sky by and by, huh?

*Y:* Ezekiel, I sure like you. You are stubborn, bullheaded, intractable and unyielding . . . and those are your good points. But maybe that's what makes you such a good prophet. No, I am not offering you pie in the sky. I am offering you me.

*E:* Well, I've got to think about that. But anyway, what about the bones? How about if I tell the people that even though their hope seems as dead as those bones were, it isn't over? You're still with us, so we've still got hope.

*Y:* The nail on the head. People are going to hear about these bones, Ezekiel. You're going to tell the whole thing. You're going to tell my people they're not dead even if they think so themselves. I'm going to keep working with them. I've got great plans for them. They're not finished.

*E:* Well, maybe I'll like this part of my job better than the other. That doom and gloom business does get to you after awhile.

*Y:* Great, you're going to be famous, Ezekiel. I guarantee it.

*E:* Yeah? Maybe I should write a book.

*Y:* Why not? Give it a shot . . . but listen, if you do, try to go easy on the vision stuff, will you? That stuff won't be too salable in a couple of millennia.

*E:* Well, maybe, but I really think I should go with the bones and the wheels inside the wheels. I definitely need those two at least. (Thinks) A couple of millennia, did you say? They might remember me that long, huh?

*Y:* Trust me.

*E:* I wonder what the world will be like then.

*Y:* Well, you'd probably prefer their methods of transportation to mine. But there will be as much need of hope then as now.

*E:* You've kind of got your work cut out for you, don't you? Don't you get tired of it?

*Y:* No, not really. As a matter of fact, I'm planning something in the future that's going to make these dry bones look like . . . well, dry bones, I guess.

*E:* Something new?

*Y:* Well, new, but still old. It all fits together.

*E:* Why don't we just keep working the bones bit? That should do it, shouldn't it?

*Y:* Ahh . . . afraid not, Zeke. Basically, it's a matter of communication . . . how you get people's attention.

*E:* I don't know, I think if I were you, I'd quit and go fishing.

*Y:* That's an interesting analogy. I'll have to see if I can use that sometime. But no, I won't quit. Too much to do. Somehow it seems the people who most need hope are the ones who rarely have it offered to them. And I've got to see that they get it. They need to find out that their lives, their existence, their meaning . . . it's all bound up in me. I'm their hope. But even my religious leaders foul me up. You were a priest, you ought to know what I'm talking about.

*E:* I guess I do. It's awfully easy to convince yourself or be convinced that the hopeless people are the ones who don't deserve hope.

*Y:* Ezekiel, I want those people to have hope offered to them. And I'm going to see that it is. I want the prostitute and the teacher to have an equal chance to find hope. The widow and the warrior. Priest and murderer. Old and young. Homosexual and heterosexual. Jew and gentile. Man and woman. Rapist and saint. There isn't a single human being on this planet I love less than any other. Some don't listen to me. Some drive me to distraction. Some aren't going to believe me. But every one of them deserves hope. And I'm going to see they have a chance if I have to die in the attempt.

*E:* See, I told you you were weird.

*Y:* Weird? Why?

*E:* What you said. "I'll see they have a chance for hope if I have to die in the attempt." (Chuckles) I'm trying to imagine the God of the universe dying. That's weird.

*Y:* Ah, Zeke, if you only knew, if you only knew. Hey listen, we've got to get moving. I've got to get you back and get this place all cleaned up before dark.

*E:* Uh, listen, would it be OK with you if I walked back? Just point me in the right direction. I like walking. It's healthy, good for the heart and all that. OK? Please?

*Y:* Sure, go ahead. Actually any direction will do. And it's not all that far. Ezekiel?

*E:* Yeah?

*Y:* Take care of yourself . . . and hang in there.

*E:* Hang in there?

*Y:* Just an expression. It means don't give up hope.

*E:* Oh. OK, you hang in there too.

*Y:* I will, Zeke, I will. •

# A story of advent

*This small boatload of refugees was picked up by a Swedish trading vessel which took them to Japan.*

*Advent is a time of hope. We can share our hope with many who feel hopeless.*

*Walter Paetkau*

For the third time that evening I dropped my book and picked up the phone.

"Hello," I said.

"May I speak to Mrs. Mabel, please?" inquired the soft voice in broken English.

"She is not home," I replied. Mabel was visiting another new immigrant arrival. Her assignment with MCC (British Columbia) kept her busy with the refugees and the sponsors. She was soon considered a confidant, friend and resource person for many.

"May I take a message?" I continued, "This is Walter."

"Walter?"

"Yes, Walter Paetkau." Silence. I tried again. "This is *Mr.* Mabel."

"Ahh . . . ," understanding dawned. "Mr. Mabel, that's good. Can you tell Mrs. Mabel to phone me back?"

Little did I realize five years ago that Mabel's assignment would open a new world to me simply because I was Mabel's husband. It began when our pastor urged Mabel to apply for the refugee coordinator position with MCC.

Having recently accepted that role in our congregation, the Olivet Mennonite Church, to prepare for a family of eight we had applied for, she struggled with this expanded opportunity.

I encouraged her, "You can do it, but don't count on me for much help."

She got the job, and our church got the first family about the same time. I tried to stay clear and let others participate where they could.

But soon came the request, "Dear, why don't you come along and visit the family. They would like that." Reluctantly I went and soon learned to speak with the dictionary in one hand and pen and paper in the other. Over the months and years filling forms, drinking tea, teasing and laughing, playing with the children and attending parties got me hooked.

Muoi, a 17-year-old, became our daughter. Vanereth and A Pao married in camp and became our children. Thongbay, courted by Khamchan, asked me to be her father.

Through those years the phone kept ringing. Many people stopped in to ask questions. Later they stopped in to say thank you. Then, some would come back to ask about families left in camp and their hopes would rise and fall with each new word or lack of it. On special occasions like Easter, Christmas and summer picnics, we saw how our family had grown.

Muoi married and gave us a son-in-law, Lhamphanh Chanthaboury, and later a sparkling-eyed granddaughter, Rachael. In June 1984, after several years of instruction and friendship by the church, they were baptized and joined our congregation.

Vanereth and A Pao have given birth to two children—Lee Ping, 2½, and Diane, now 1. The other Sunday during the worship service Lee Ping ambled to the front of the church to sit with "grum paw."

Thongbay and Khamchan, active in the Lao Fellowship, have a family of three. Ingo insists I play cars with him or build blocks. Alana is walking now and saying her first words. Mabel rocks the new baby, Linda.

After four years the world seemed in place. We had family and friendships and were involving several children in Sunday school, clubs and junior choir. *Then came the news from Central America.* Families fleeing the revolution needed help.

"Walter," asked my wife, "do you think Olivet would sponsor a brother and sister from El Salvador? They have already been waiting in Mexico City over five months. Can you place it on the agenda?" (I am church chairman.)

"Don't put your hopes up too high," I responded. "You know we're involved with five families already."

The item was placed on the agenda, and Olivet came through with budget and with volunteers, several who could speak Spanish. "Just don't get me involved," I insisted.

In August 1983 Silverio and Maria Diaz arrived. "We should have them over, you know," Mabel said. It was true. Over supper we pointed at various items. They tried English and we tried Spanish. At Christmas their card read, "Dear Mom and Dad, thank you for the help, we love you." Last spring we wept with them at the death of their father. This summer they gave us a ride in their "new" 1973 Toyota.

To many I am still Mr. Mabel, to some I am Walter, to others Dad, to some Grampa, to no one Mr. Paetkau. I think about this sometimes and wonder what it all means. Does it go back to my childhood? Among the various things I wanted to be—rancher, scientist, veterinarian and sailor—was also missionary. Perhaps, I thought, I could go to Japan because the village I grew up in—Rosemary, Alta.—included many Japanese and I like them.

None of my childhood fantasies have become reality. And yet, while I have never gone to the Orient, the Orient has come to me. •

# Wisdom's third stage: kingdom perspective

*Ted VanderEnde*

Wisdom's goal is to help us cope with life skillfully, according to God's ways. The first two stages deal primarily with life from the perspective of where I am living. Proverbs in particular has a mundane overtone and helps answer the questions of common, earthly existence. Job and Ecclesiastes observe that answers are not always easy in calamity.

Here wisdom requires us to move from an earthly to a more heavenly view. In Ecclesiastes and Job the sage asks the reader to come away from the terrestrial in order to look at existence from a more celestial position. Particularly in Psalm 73 we move from human, limited observation (God, it does not make sense that the wicked have it so easy) to the divine, eternal evaluation (They will perish in the judgment to come, but the righteous will dwell with me forever).

The wisdom of Jesus asks his followers to look at life from this exalted position. Time and again, in the Sermon on the Mount and the parables and sayings of Christ, the listener is forced to think from the viewpoint of eternity. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek (something wisdom already implied), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (a new perspective). Mercy will be shown one future day, the pure in heart will see God, and peacemakers (wisdom means peacemaking) shall be called the sons and daughters of God. They will inherit the earth.

The violent person who shouts others down with his foul mouth is not merely a fool, as Proverbs states, but is in danger of the fires of hell. Adultery must be avoided, not because it will not pay in the here and now and violates God's present order, but the danger is to lose the whole body in eternal condemnation. The proverb which tells us that it is wiser to treat one's enemy well is amplified in the Sermon with the phrase "That you may be the sons of your Father in heaven." The social outreach to the poor, clearly stated in the wisdom of the Old Testament, is immediately related to receiving eternal rewards. So is simplicity of life in fasting. The wisdom of the new age is not to seek happiness here on earth but to lay up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy. The wisdom of the kingdom is to do the will of the Father, and that is linked to either entering the kingdom of heaven or being told, "I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!"

*We must recognize that our earthly focus is like a dim mirror. God's kingdom perspectives will show us many insights we never expected (1 Corinthians 13:9-12).*

All through the Sermon on the Mount there is this eternal perspective of how life should be lived.

Many parables and sayings reflect that there is more to life than earthly existence. The man who stores his goods for years of pleasure here on earth is a fool. He is not rich toward God for eternity. We must learn to fear God, but not only from the Old Testament wisdom perspective as it leads us away from evil (Job 28:28). We must learn to fear God because, after he has killed the body, he has power to throw you into hell. We are called to be honest and transparent because those who confess Christ clearly before people the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God. The disciple must live in anticipation of the coming of Christ. Jesus taught that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. He wondered if he would find faith on the earth when he came again.

There is an eschatological element in this wisdom, a new and clear perspective, hinted at in the previous stages of wisdom, revealed clearly in the speeches of the Son of Man.

We cannot approach life seeking just the first stage of wisdom—seeking earthly ease and tranquillity and harmony. Neither are we caught in the second stage—without any answers in the midst of the enigmas of life. The third stage includes previous levels and rises above them. This new wisdom may say similar things as were taught before but from a kingdom perspective. Life has perplexities, but it gives hope and prospect of the coming of a righteous judge. Until he comes, we are asked to be as wise stewards, living as much in the wisdom of his reign as we possibly can.

(Note: There is good material on the market which will help you gain more understanding in biblical wisdom. Some authors are Father Murphy, who, besides books, has also produced a helpful tape set on wisdom, and authors like Crenshaw, Scott, Beardslee, Whybray and Von Rad. Also helpful is James Williams' book *Those Who Ponder Proverbs* and the Tyndale commentaries on Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.) *Last in the series on wisdom*

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# A Mennonite working with IVCF

*Mark Wiens*

"You should meet Lowell Busenitz and Sharon Swartzendruber; they are also Mennonites," Jana told me as she described Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship on campus. So I began 11 years of involvement in IVCF as a student and a staff worker.

I felt strongly about student evangelism then and I still do. My feeling comes from Jesus' commission to make disciples everywhere. Although the campus is changing, many people there are between ages 18 and 22.

Many students choose a life philosophy and values at this age. As these men and women try different ideals, it's vital for other students and faculty to present them in a clear, reasonable and creative way with the call to follow Jesus. This call will no doubt include the visible witness of the fellowship of Christians on campus or in the community.

There are many ways to do campus evangelism, although three have been prominent. One is for a person or couple to go to campus, start talking to students and faculty, and form a church from those who become Christians. Sometimes these people get a job on campus and build a church from their co-workers and students whom they lead to Christ. Mennonites have planted a number of these churches. We are helped in starting these churches by our Mennonite students and faculty already there who carry a similar church, ethnic and cultural background. But if these churches settle for fellowship around a common background and don't reach out to people who may think or look different, these once fresh congregations will stagnate from the lack of fresh winds of the Holy Spirit.

A second way of doing student evangelism involves setting up a denominational ministry on campus. Some examples are Baptist Student Unions and Catholic Centers.

A third approach is where organizations carry on campus ministries without formal ties to a church body. They usually call themselves interdenominational. Examples are Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Crusade for Christ and The Navigators. They meet in university union rooms, dorm rooms, lounges and sorority and fraternity houses.

*Many students are choosing life philosophies and values on the college campuses. We must be there with them.*

Because my background has been in the interdenominational approach, I will share some thoughts I've had from being an Anabaptist/Mennonite (A/M) in an interdenominational setting. In the same way I'll focus primarily on the ministry of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF).

I've come to believe that a call to campus missions for an A/M will sometimes be to participate in a ministry such as IVCF.

Working interdenominationally is one way to build some relationships with Christians of other church backgrounds. This, in turn, can break through some of our stereotypes and allay some of our fears of what the others are like. It can help us see that Jesus' statement about all people knowing you are my disciples if you have love for one another is to be practiced between people of different denominations as well as in our local churches. Working across denominational lines won't solve all church unity problems, but it can stimulate us to grow in this area.

Working in IVCF also gives us a chance to talk about Anabaptist distinctives such as biblical pacifism, radical discipleship, consensus decision making and others. At one IVCF conference, I led an optional workshop on the nuclear arms race. I was surprised at the high turnout. When I asked why they came, they told of their generous job offers from defense contractors. I could tell they needed to talk about it. Most of their churches had not said anything about Christians building bombs. As an IVCF staff member opposed to the arms

race, I could help them think more about this.

Many evangelical Christians thirst for the whole gospel that includes peace. In fact, Mennonites cannot promote the gospel of peace by keeping it to ourselves.

An A/M could also work in IVCF to assert more influence on the organization as a whole. The IVCF staff team is about half college graduates and half seminary graduates. The seminary graduates naturally do most of the biblical teaching. The seminaries who send people to IVCF staff shape IV's ministry style and content the most. I don't know of any Mennonite seminary graduates ever working on IVCF staff. I felt somewhat alone my last years on IVCF staff because there was no A/M seminary graduate with whom I could share my work on IV staff.

Many students become Christians through IVCF. Some of these have no church background. They often attend the church of their friends who guided them to Christ, but sometimes they check out the church of their IVCF staff worker. Mennonite IVCF staff increase the occasions where new Christians come into our churches and enliven us with their faith.

Another way to influence IVCF is through literature. I read many Inter-Varsity Press books. These are written by people of various theological viewpoints. I'm glad Anabaptist writer Ron Sider also wrote books published by Inter-Varsity Press. His books stirred me to look at my theological background further. I hope we see more of our books published through Inter-Varsity Press and other non-Mennonite publishers. Our message must have a wider readership.

There are things we learn too as we work with Christians of other backgrounds. I grew as I learned new ways of God, the church and the church's ministry. I drew from IVCF a commitment to share our faith in Christ. If someone has told us the good news, then we inherit responsibility to tell others.

We need to think also about relating to people from our Mennonite congregations who minister on the campus through IVCF. Though these students are often busy on campus and sometimes away at conferences, they need pastoral care. At times they want a person from our congregations who will be their friend. This individual can be their sounding board as they wrestle with young adult issues and seek to be a witnessing Christian on campus. This person can be a pastor or lay member with a listening ear, a loving heart and some knowledge of young adult issues. I suggest reading *The Problem of Faith Development in Young Adults* by Robert T. Gribbon to get acquainted with these issues.

*One of our contributions is to be involved in the decision-making processes in a creative and constructive way.*

These students also need to share their learnings and experiences with the congregation. This grants the congregation a chance to learn from them and to contribute to them.

Sometimes people want to serve on IVCF staff when they graduate. This was true for me. And they will usually ask their church for financial support. This asks the congregation to support a non-Mennonite agency. Few Mennonite churches will totally agree on this issue. It's important how the congregation decides. Do they vote, thus highlighting majority/minority feelings that can create sides? Or do they listen and discuss until they arrive at a decision with which all can agree?

Those IVCF staff who are growing in their A/M understanding need strong emotional and prayer support from a local Mennonite church. Being an A/M in an interdenominational setting has similarities to the missionary who crosses cultural boundaries. Mennonite IVCF staff need to know two languages of faith. These languages carry similarities but also differences. Some of these are apparent right away. Others take longer to learn. This is challenging, unsettling and can be lonely all at the same time. These people depend on friends in the local church who lend that listening ear.

Well, I did meet Lowell Busenitz and Sharon Swartzendruber through IVCF. Inter-Varsity is one interdenominational mission that has kept alive to A/M involvement and influence.

Urbana '84, Dec. 27-31, will again focus our sharing at the 14th IVCF Student Missions Convention. I hope to see some of you there.

*Mark Wiens is a second-year student in the Master of Divinity program for pastoral ministry at the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, IN 46517.*

**U.S. officials** publicly supported the "Contadora" peace plan for Central America, but they privately plotted to sabotage it, the *Washington Post* recently revealed. The *Post* obtained a secret National Security Council background paper boasting that the United States "effectively blocked" the plan. The document said the United States would "continue to exert strong pressure" on Guatemala to back an alternative plan that is "broadly consistent with U.S. interests."

**Two Nicaraguan pastors** visited Mennonite Central Committee headquarters in Akron, Pa., in October and spoke at several churches in the area. José Jesus Ulloa, a Baptist pastor, and Nicanor Mairena, a Nazarene pastor, were part of a 10-member team of Nicaraguan evangelical pastors who visited 10 states during an Oct. 8-22 visit to give firsthand reports on the church under the Sandinista government. Both gave examples of the suffering that the present U.S.-supported war with Nicaragua is causing, including the deaths of several members of their churches. Nearly 2,000 civilians have died from that war this year, they said.

# NEWS

COMS meets in Denver

## Mennonite leaders look at peacemaking, MWC

Denver (Meetinghouse)—How do we deal with Ron Sider's call for a dramatic new approach to Mennonite peacemaking? What is the future of Mennonite World Conference? Can the four largest Mennonite and Brethren in Christ bodies get together in this decade for a mass conference?

Questions such as these occupied members of the Council of Moderators and Secretaries at their Nov. 1-2 meetings here. Participants included top executives and elected officials of the Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ.

The Sider discussion generated the one formal recommendation to emerge from the meetings. At Strasbourg, France, Ron Sider had presented to Mennonite World Conference a plea for creation of a church-trained, non-violent peacekeeping force of thousands, ready to stand between warring parties, even though many might die.

COMS, as the group representing the major conferences within the North American Mennonite community, felt responsible to follow up the appeal.

Several people expressed enthusiasm for the thrust of Sider's call but some misgivings about the scope and details.

"When you ask for thousands when we're not putting them onto the mission field, we have a lot to talk about," said Myron Augsburger, MC moderator. Still, he urged that the Sider proposal not be considered "so unrealistic that we'll do nothing."

Approved unanimously was a statement that COMS "receives with appreciation the bold and imaginative call" issued by Sider and affirms the biblical basis of his challenge. The resolution calls for MCC Peace Section to give further study and exploration as to how implementation might take shape.

The Strasbourg sessions had also produced the first North American MWC president in more than a decade, and Ross Bender, now a pastor in Colorado, joined the COMS group for a discussion of MWC's future vision.

Bender confessed that he had been surprised to be asked to take his position, thinking the presidency might have been filled by a Latin American. His conversation with COMS centered on the conflict between an apparent sense of people wanting to see MWC grow in vision and programming and a general wariness to see it take on an enlarged structure or bureaucracy.

To avoid the overwhelming dominance of North Americans at international meetings, Myron Augsburger proposed a series of continent-wide assemblies for Africa, Asia and Latin America—with only a few North Americans invited.

"Basically I think we want to see increased activity, with the same staff power, but perhaps a little different style of working," summed up Vern Preheim, GC general secretary.

At the North American level, the group discussed plans for a 1989 joint assembly for the GC and MC churches—with a clear invitation for the MB and BIC groups to join in some way, a proposal which brought at least tentative expressions of interest.

BIC and MB regular conference meetings are not scheduled in 1989, but the representatives of both groups held out the possibility of taking part in some type of study/fellowship meeting.

*Ross Bender (left) shares his visions for Mennonite World Conference. At right is Jake Fransen, moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.*

Interpretation of Scripture was suggested as one topic which would be of interest to all four groups in a study conference format.

Planners are looking at Normal, Ill., as first choice, and Wichita, Kan., as second choice for the 1989 gathering, which will be the second joint meeting for the MC and GC groups.

All four of the COMS conferences, plus the Church of the Brethren, are involved in preparations for Alive '85, designated as a conference on "Evangelism and Church Growth in Action" and planned for April 11-14, 1985, at the Regency Hotel in Denver.

The group decided to invite Mennonite and Brethren in Christ college presidents to meet jointly with COMS next year to probe the broader vision for Mennonite education. *David Shelly*

**PTL Religious Network** president Jim Bakker and his wife, Tammy, have been pleading poverty on the air. But the couple recently bought a $450,000 "hideaway" home and $100,000 worth of automobiles, according to *The Charlotte* (N.C.) *Observer*. In a recent telecast Mrs. Bakker said PTL viewers and supporters must pay PTL's debts because "Jim and I can't. We've given everything we have, and literally we have given everything." When news of the California purchases came out, the Bakkers said on the air that they bought the Palm Springs house for vacationing and retirement and that they spent their money, not PTL's.

**Why is the United States** spending more than half its military budget—$170 billion—on NATO in fiscal year 1985? According to John Tower, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, speaking on the Senate floor, June 20, "We are not there for altruistic reasons. We are not there just to defend blue-eyed Europeans. We are there because it is in our national interest to be there. It is axiomatic that, when confronted by a very, very powerful adversary with a global military capability, you establish your defense perimeter as close to his shores as possible and as far from your own shores as possible."

**Hunger is so extreme** in Brazil that starving people can take food that belongs to others without this being considered stealing, says a pamphlet issued by the Brazilian Catholic bishops. The pamphlet says 86 million of Brazil's 122 million people eat less than the UN-prescribed minimum 2,240 calories a day.

# Conference calls for peace church evangelism

Berne, Ind. (MCC U.S.)—About 200 people met at First Mennonite Church here Nov. 2-3 for an assembly on Peace Church Evangelism. The event, sponsored by MCC U.S. Peace Section, drew 200 participants.

In three full-group sessions Friday evening and Saturday morning, and a variety of workshops Saturday afternoon, the participants discussed aspects of how the gospel is understood and proclaimed by churches of the Anabaptist and peace church tradition.

Though similar to MCC-sponsored peace conferences in past years, this year's meeting focused specifically on integrating peace and evangelism, discerning the spirit of the peacemaker and parenting for peace and justice.

Art McPhee, consultant in evangelism and church growth for Mennonite Board of Missions, spoke on "Integrating Peace and Evangelism." McPhee cited John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you," as perhaps the simplest statement of the Great Commission.

Although "making disciples is the ultimate goal of evangelizing," McPhee noted that there are two complex sides of this effort: not only knowing what we are to do but how best to do it.

"Shalom, God's peace, is at the heart of evangelism," McPhee said. "Shalom is, in itself, integration." The message Christians are called upon to integrate, he explained, is "the possibility of wholeness and reconciliation."

Marcus Smucker, assistant professor of pastoral theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., led the session on "The Spirit of the Peacemaker."

He began his presentation by expressing concern that Christians too often polarize their desire for a life in the Spirit and the issues of peace and justice, when actually they are deeply intertwined.

*Gloria Miller leads the assembly in an "altar call," a reaffirmation that Jesus is Lord. At left is James Longacre, chairman of MCC U.S. Peace Section.*

The dichotomy only exists in Christians' minds, Smucker said. "If we phrase the question, 'Which is it, peace *or* Jesus?' we have to see that our works for God . . . emerge out of the character of God. These dichotomies we hold are idolatry," he said.

Gloria Miller from Hartford, S.D., led the third session of the assembly, "Parenting for Peace and Justice." Miller represents General Conference Women in Mission on the MCC U.S. Peace Section and serves on MCC Peace Section.

Using the story of baby Moses as an example, Miller drew parallels on how Mennonite children should be raised today. Moses' mother knew who her God was and she trusted him fiercely, she explained. "This mother nurtured her children in real life experiences and with her religious values.

"We Mennonites must insist and ensure that our children are nurtured with our unique perspective of the gospel," Miller added. "Be sure they not only lift and sit on the *Martyr's Mirror*, but be sure they open it and read it."

During the school years, parents should look at the contents of their children's schoolbooks and provide another dimension for them, Miller said. When they study history, children should know about the lives of people like St. Francis of Assisi. When studying World War II, they should read the story of Corrie Ten Boom, Miller added.

Miller also urged conference participants to consider adopting a child as a way of communicating God's love with oneself. "To me, this is real evangelism."

David Shenk of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions in Salunga, Pa., presented gripping examples of non-violent Christian witness throughout the centuries in his address Saturday evening. He called these "signs of peace and signs of the kingdom."

Robert Hull, secretary for peace and justice for the General Conference, led a workshop on "Celebration, Spiritual Disciplines and World Needs." Drawing from Richard Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline*, Hull spoke of an ordered way of acting and living that sets us before God so God can work through us.

Also at the conference, representatives of the Inter-Staff Council on Peace Church Evangelism presented a proposal for an interdenominational, churchwide evangelism effort. This campaign would aim to reach unchurched or nominal Christians attracted to media efforts with a message of evangelism from a peace church perspective. *Tim Buckwalter*

**Termination of the Poverty Fund because of budget constraints** evoked protest at October meetings of the Commission on Home Ministries. Gene Stoltzfus, urban life director in Chicago and former Mennonite Voluntary Service director, presided over a mock funeral of the peace and justice grants, formerly called the Poverty Fund. "Pallbearers" included Richard Boyd, Kris Chupp and Richard Rutschman, who have been closely involved with voluntary service among the poor in Chicago. It was difficult for CHM staff to proceed with agenda after this dramatic protest. Staff reviewed again why Poverty Fund and other CHM programs were cut. They agreed to publicly express their anguish over cancellation of peace and justice grants, to commit themselves to prayer and fasting, and to issue this public concern not only for these grants but also for the inhumane starvation of millions of Africans while prosperous nations stockpile surplus food and pay farmers not to grow produce.

*Mock funeral at CHM meeting.*

# Northern District holds 'Consultation on Faith'

Freeman, S.D. (GCMC)—Around 70 people from five states gathered on the campus of Freeman Junior College Oct. 22-24 for a "Consultation on Faith." Each autumn the Northern District ministers and their spouses meet for a retreat or conference. This year they expanded their program to include three or four lay workers from each congregation.

With the objective being "Unity in the Faith" (Ephesians 4:11-13), eight presentations were given by district people. Discussion followed each study.

Louis Goertz of Freeman, in his keynote address, "It Matters *How* We Believe," stated that one's belief will be evident in one's actions and advancement toward maturity.

Willis Busenitz, Busby, Mont., explained the conversion aspect of salvation, saying that a true conversion has repentance, faith, confession, assurance. He stressed that salvation is God's gift, not reward for work well done.

Jerry Kaiser, Marion, S.D., continued by describing the discipleship aspect of salvation. The Holy Spirit plays an important part by indwelling the believer and producing fruit.

Rod Janzen, Freeman, traced the Anabaptist movement by reviewing the beliefs which set them apart and still form our doctrine today.

Mike Bogard of Marion spoke on "Peace with God and Man." He observed that "peace is the refusal to go along with the world on whom to love and whom to hate."

Elmer Wall, Freeman, introduced the subject "Interpreting the Bible," contending that we must interpret the Scriptures through Christ's teaching.

Albert Epp, Henderson, Neb., covering the same topic, pointed out different views held by various religious groups and also emphasized the centrality of Christ in the Bible.

In developing the theme of "Wholesome Family Living," Susan Schrag of Marion expressed the need to affirm each other and to think positively instead of negatively.

Russell Hobbs, Carpenter, S.D., had the subject of the sexual revolution. He admonished the church to give direction in this maze of rebellion to social forms.

*Sieglinda Preheim*


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Mennonite Mutual Aid


## Winnipeg to host MWC XII

Winnipeg—In July 1990 over 10,000 Mennonites are expected to assemble in Winnipeg for the XIIth Mennonite World Conference. The Winnipeg Convention Centre will be the major hosting facility for the sessions.

Naming this one of the largest conventions ever to convene in Winnipeg, representatives from the Mennonite World Conference—Jane Friesen, MWC executive assistant, Lombard, Ill., Jacob F. Pauls, MWC vice president for North America; and John E. Wieler, MCC Canada—together with Winnipeg Convention Centre staff convened a press conference at the centre Oct. 15.

The convention centre people said MWC XII will tax the lodging and meeting facilities of Winnipeg, but they feel the prospects are a challenge they gladly accept.

Canada currently has 72,000 baptized Mennonites, and Winnipeg has the largest concentration of Mennonites in any one city of the world. There are at least 36 organized Mennonite churches in Winnipeg. Most of the Manitoba Mennonite groups are already committed to share in hosting the 1990 MWC in Winnipeg.

THE MENNONITE
COM EDITION

# COMMENTS

## INDIA: Gift of Mercy

An angry mob surged around the mission primary school in Belladula and threatened to kill not only the staunch young convert, Kriparam, but all who had come from Champa for the young man's baptism on March 25, 1926.

"Perhaps we should postpone Kripa's baptism," the evangelist suggested. "It is not safe. The family has already locked up his wife so that she cannot be baptized with him."

Kriparam stood straight and tall and fearless before the tense crowd around him in spite of the humiliating beating his uncle had just inflicted on him. Only the timely intervention of his father had protected him from a worse fate. Grasping the stick from his brother, he had said, "Dhansai, we have given life to Kriparam, but we have failed to give him the kind of teaching and example that his new religion has given him. What has happened, has happened. Let it be."

Kripa turned sadly away from his family. He was all too conscious of the deep hurt he had caused them.

His mind turned back to the group of Christians still standing in the doorway of the primary school. "Do not be afraid to baptize me," he said. "The

**Rev. Kripandan Ghore**

Lord Jesus has appeared to me in a vision and has given me peace. If anyone wants to kill me for the sake of the Lord Jesus, I am ready to die. He is my Lord. Him only will I serve."

For a moment all were thoughtfully silent. The evangelist turned to the other Christians with him. "Kripa has a firm faith. He has requested that we baptize him today. This is the day that the Lord has made. I am prepared to die with him, if that is necessary."

Kriparam was baptized, rechristened *Kripadan*, "the Gift of Mercy," and accepted as a member of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

This same courage and firmness of purpose that Kripadan showed in the face of danger and threat of life, characterized his long life and rich ministry in the Mennonite church.

Immediately following the baptism, Kripadan was banished from his home. Early the next morning his wife was released to join him. On April 17 she too received Christ in baptism.

In July of that same year, Kripadan, along with his wife Phulquar Bai, were called to Mauhadih to attend the Middle school there. The next step was to Janjgir for Bible school. With his diploma in hand, he was ready to join the evangelistic work in the Korba area under the Home Mission Board of the church conference.

Then came the day he was ordained a "Dharmupdeshak," a preacher, at the annual church conference. Now he could officiate at children's blessing, at baptisms, communion services, burials, marriages, and in the ordination of other pastors. At the same time he was appointed supervisor of the evangelistic work.

His ministry included many pastorates in the various General Conference Mennonite Church communities of India. Retirement came in 1966. On Church Conference Sunday, October 31, in an impressive service, Rev. Kripadan Ghore was retired from active service. As a token of the esteem in which he was held, the conference presented him with a friendship ring and with a set of living room furniture.

Reminiscing over his past, Rev. Ghore has only gratitude to his faithful Lord. "I claim Titus 3:5-7 for myself," Kripadan mused. "Every opportunity to preach the Gospel is a joy to me."

HELEN KORNELSEN (An excerpt from the story that Helen has written about the inspiring life of Rev. Kripadan Ghore.)

## BRAZIL: A Christmas Reflection

Let me relate a Christmas incident. Our Sunday school kids put on a small cantata. As I was backstage helping with costumes, I vowed I would *never* do this again! The kids were wild and disobedient and loud. The bigger kids were stepping all over the little ones. It was terribly hot, stuffy, and crowded backstage. I was soaked with perspiration. "Never again, never again," I kept muttering.

Finally they were halfway organized and they bounded out on stage. The only onstage problem was that our king's lice just wouldn't leave him in peace, so his crown was always very cockeyed. As they played their parts and sang their hearts out, my heart melted just a little bit.

I guess next year we will be doing it again. After all, this was the first Christmas program that most of these kids had ever known. How did they know how to act right?

MARLENE DAKU

# COM: Changing Faces

A new COM staff position, COM Canada Coordinator, has been created. This person who will be located in Winnipeg will have administrative, communications, and church relations responsibilities.

The COM staff is anticipating the arrival of Jeannie Zehr as a member of the administrative team on January 15, 1985. Jeannie will serve as Secretary of Mission Communications.

Peter Kehler announced during the COM mid-year meetings in September his resignation as Secretary for Asia. Peter has provided significant and capable leadership since 1978. A COM search committee has begun the process of selecting a replacement. Peter plans to terminate as of March 1985.

# ZAIRE: Munjila Muandu

**Munjila Muandu**

Munjila Muandu takes her responsibilities as regional coordinator of women's work in Zaire very seriously.

After she was chosen for this position, she began planning to visit the churches. Her region, Bandundu, is one of four regions in the Community of Mennonites in Zaire (CMZ). Leaving her family of nine children at home in Kikwit, she was on the road from February 2 to May 9, 1984, visiting twelve different churches.

Not having a vehicle, nor resources to pay for transportation, she traveled on foot most of the way. Many kilometers separate some of the villages, and usually someone walked along with her.

When Munjila arrived at each church, she would greet the people and call them together for a meeting. She had come not only to learn what the women were doing in their churches, but to witness to them. Her desire was to present Christ in such a way that those who had not yet accepted Christ would do so.

Munjila's carefully typewritten report of that visit to twelve churches includes the reference of Scripture she based her message on, how many attended the meeting, and how many indicated a willingness to accept Christ. The total attendance she reported was over 4,000 with 445 persons deciding to accept Christ.

Although Munjila has not attended a Bible training school, she has taken five years of Theological Education by Extension (TEE) courses. These courses provide an opportunity for interested persons to study at home using programmed texts.

Muandu, Munjila's husband, is a lay leader in the church and supports the family by being involved in commerce. He has encouraged his wife in this ministry and takes care of the family in her absence. Munjila helps keep the family fed by working in their fields of peanuts, manioc, and corn.

ANGELA REMPEL

# URUGUAY: Changes of Heart

Some of our people attended some evangelistic meetings in Montevideo led by Juan Carlos Ortiz. Two people accepted the Lord during these meetings.

Tito had been coming to our church meetings quite regularly for about seven months to please his wife. She had begun filing for a divorce, but agreed to one more try if he would accompany her to church regularly. I've had a few counseling sessions with them. Their marriage is improving. The climax was a couple of weeks ago when Tito dedicated himself to the Lord.

Washington also accepted Christ during those meetings. He is the boyfriend of one of the young people from our youth group. He had been meeting with another missionary here for several weeks to share and talk about the Bible. Now he is witnessing to his family and he wants to get baptized in a couple of weeks.

JOHN FEHR

# CHINA: A Glass Bird

After the service I went to look at the flowers. My twenty-one-year-old friend, a psychiatric nurse, who had begun seminary/Bible school the week before, greeted me warmly, as did another young seminarian. They in turn introduced me to a few of the men seminarians, one of whom took a picture of us in the church. The nurse said she wanted to give me a gift. She took out of her purse a glass bird. She gave me a card with these words: "April 22, 1984. My Dear Herta Funk. Happy EASTER! Please you can accept this small gift as a token of our friendship. I hope we can become good friends. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do. Our nationality is different. Our age is different. But our heart is seem (same). Love YQR."

What better gift could I have wished for? Moments like this make this year so rich.

HERTA FUNK

# JAPAN: Refugee Resettlement

In 1978, I read in *The Japan Times* about a group of Vietnamese "boat people" who had just been rescued along the Japan coast. A Tenrikyo (Buddhist) priest offered to provide temporary shelter for them on the temple grounds. The article mentioned that several more boatloads of refugees had already been brought to Japan and that the government was trying to find adequate facilities for them.

The newspaper office gave me the number of the Tenrikyo priest. He informed me that since there

**Pastor Inamine chairs SIVA meeting**

were no relief facilities in Japan, the government had instructed the Japan Red Cross to subcontract housing from voluntary religious groups or from private institutions.

Mennonite pastor, Michio Ohno, and I visited many government offices getting statistics but no information about how volunteers might get involved. Finally directed to the Catholic center for joint voluntary agencies, a Catholic priest provided invaluable background information about the refugees' plight and the Japanese government's way of responding. Japan could no longer turn its back on the plight of these struggling Asian neighbors. They had literally arrived on her doorstep!

**Refugee children going to school**

In 1981, the prime minister made the goodwill gesture of accepting one thousand Indochinese refugees into Japanese society. A small resettlement center in Osaka "selected" refugees to receive three months of language training and orientation to Japanese culture, after which they would be "graduated." In time the center had a waiting list.

Pastor Ohno and I were directed to a small camp north of Tokyo which we visited many times over the next four years. New families kept arriving. Some other English-speaking persons and I began teaching English conversation to some of these refugees. Japanese friends and church groups provided bedding, dishes, and clothing. With the help of MCC we were able to find church sponsors for several families in North America.

By the fall of 1981 it was announced that refugees no longer qualified for transfer to third countries. This was a great shock for many who already had close relatives living abroad.

Volunteers involved with the families began to inquire about ways to sponsor persons by direct resettlement. The concern was for the psychological welfare of the people who had been waiting to leave Japan for two years. Adults were not receiving any Japanese language training nor cultural orientation. Minimum wage employment did not offer much financial security to live in Japan. Refugees felt certain they would never be accepted by the Japanese.

Children were not accepted into local school because they did not speak Japanese. For the sake of fifteen children in the Tokyo camp, volunteers began a special program of language instruction. In the spring of 1982 the children and teachers drove to the local elementary school. The children exhibiting their papers and reading aloud from their books astonished the principal. With additional visits to the city authorities, local PTA, and government and tax offices, the children were eventually admitted.

This accomplishment inspired our loosely-organized volunteer group to form SIVA (Saitama International Volunteers Association). Today SIVA has nearly seventy members representing all walks of life, nine nationalities, Christians and non-Christians. Mennonite Pastor, Yoshihira Inamine, is coordinator of SIVA.

Church groups and individuals throughout Japan hearing of our efforts have made financial contributions. A refugee sponsorship program and a night school for teaching Japanese have been started. The United Nations offers legal and procedural assistance to volunteer organizations such as SIVA.

Working alongside SIVA volunteers, I am inspired to keep on doing justice in the name of our Lord Jesus.

SANDRA LIECHTY

# ANNA V. LIECHTY: Thirty-eight Years of Service

"I wondered why I didn't say 'yes' to the Lord sooner," says Anna V. Liechty. For ten years she had been fighting the call to be a missionary.

After she made her decision, she wasn't sure how to tell her parents. To her surprise when she finally told them they said that on their wedding night, during their first devotions together, they had promised the Lord that if he should give them children, the first one would be dedicated to his service, as a missionary if he should so choose.

"If I'd have my life to live over again, I'd do the same thing!" she says now at age sixty-nine as she looks back over her thirty-eight years of service as a missionary in Zaire. With two diplomas from Moody Bible Institute she left, in 1946, for what was then the Belgian Congo. She went expecting to teach in a Bible training school.

However, one thing Anna learned before she ever taught in a Bible school is that one had to be flexible. Her flexibility certainly was put to the test as she was assigned to teach in five different locations, in elementary schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, and a lower level teacher training school. She was asked to teach a wide variety of subjects and at times was also a principal, although she prefers teaching to administrative work.

During Anna's last ten years in Zaire, she taught at the Bible Institute at Kalonda. Her favorite subject was Bible Doctrine. Anna taught Bible Doctrine and Music in French to the men and women who had completed two years of high school. The rest of the spouses are taught in the Tshiluba language. Anna taught them Bible, music, practical Christian work, and homemaking.

**Anna V. Liechty**

On her furloughs, Anna completed B.S. and B.A. degrees from Goshen College, and a master's degree in French. She was studying French in Belgium during the political upheaval of 1960. Listening to the news reports of the turmoil and evacuations, she wondered, "What am I studying here for. I may never go back there." But she did go back, and learned to be thankful for the portion of her possessions which remained.

Anna says she first used flashlights to find her way in the dark, but it seemed the batteries were always dead. "Phooey on flashlights," she said. From then on she used only a German-made kerosene lantern which people in Zaire still refer to as "an Anna V. lantern."

"It's important that people give real prayer support to missionaries," Anna says. "Write and tell them you are praying for them." She always found encouragement when she received such a letter.

COM, along with many others in Africa and in North America, say: "Thank you, Anna V., for your thirty-eight years of service."

# HONG KONG: Answered Prayer

One great reason to pray is that God takes us seriously and answers. Here in Hong Kong we see several answers to encourage all of you.

One is the growth of the local leadership to the extent that we are having to plan ahead so that they can all be used to their full potential. Anna Chiu, who graduated from China Evangelical Seminary last spring, was ordained in Hong Kong on October 28, 1984.

Another answer is God's provision for a new opening for Hugh and Janet Sprunger to move into a new area and begin a new work. Yet another is the Hong Kong Mennonite Center, which continues to be a versatile place we all use and also share with other groups as their need arises.

TIM SPRUNGER

# BOLIVIA: Life in the Local Church

This first year has above all been one of familiarizing ourselves with the Bolivian Mennonite Church (BMC). This has included such tasks as finding our way out to rural churches on the not-so-super highways leading east from Santa Cruz; getting to know faces, and names, then trying to put the two together; finding out little by little who's related to whom; and trying to get a feel for the social, religious, and cultural climate they live in.

The significant developments that we have witnessed in the local church this past year can be classified in three main areas: (a) increased participation and ownership by Bolivians in the structures and life of the church; (b) a broader awareness of the global Mennonite church; and (c) a strengthening of the Bolivian Mennonite Church's identity as a believers' church.

Traditionally, those who have been reached by mission personnel and programs have been families who have had original contact with MCC and the mission dating back several years. These families are thus rural based and are basically poor campesinos who either own and farm a modest amount of land or work as hired help on larger farms.

Within the past several years, the children of many of these families have come to the city of Santa Cruz for better educational or employment opportunities. Their contact with relatives and family friends here in the city has resulted in increased contacts on the part of the mission with the larger extended families of our church members, thus increasing our ministry opportunities.

The result of new efforts of evangelism goes beyond the obvious fact that the church is growing numerically to an equally important and exciting possibility—the possibility that our current "homogeneous group" of lower class rural-rooted lowlanders will be disrupted and become a "heterogeneous group" including people of other social classes and geographical regions.

Can these barriers of race and social class be overcome? Certainly there are many cultural (and human nature factors) working against us. But the power of the love of God is strong and transcending.

STEPHEN "TIG" INTAGLIATA

**Mennonite Mental Health Services** awards six scholarships each spring to college or graduate students pursuing careers in mental health fields. This year the scholarships are again available, but they will be awarded from the newly established Elmer Ediger Memorial Scholarship Fund. Ediger was a founder of MMHS and served as director of Prairie View in Newton, Kan., from 1957 until his death in 1983. The scholarships are between $500 and $1,000. For application forms write to Carl L. Good, Executive Director, MMHS, 21 S. 12th St., Box M, Akron, PA 17501. Applications and all supporting data must be received by March 1, 1985.

**A 1985 "Cheyenne Calendar"** has been published for the second consecutive year by the Cheyenne Christian Education Project. A Christian mission outreach and teaching tool, the calendar includes historical and linguistic information plus a list of cassette tapes and printed resources in Cheyenne. Scenes on the calendar are from Cheyenne culture. Copies are available from the Cheyenne Christian Education Project, Box 37, Busby, MT 59016, (406) 592-3643. Faith and Life Bookstore, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114, is selling the calendar for $3.95.

**The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center,** which a representative of the Topsfield Foundation called "one of the most active and most successful local education ministries in the country," needs $4,000 in order to receive two matching grants of $2,000 each. The center needs additional staff to keep up its activities. Write to LMPC, 528 E. Madison, Lombard, IL 60148.

# MEDA discusses conflict, reconciliation at annual meeting

Toledo, Ohio (Meetinghouse)—Laurence Eck, national coordinator of the Christian Conciliation Service, told Mennonite businesspeople attending the annual convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates that each year 8 million lawsuits are launched in the United States, and many of them are between Christians. In fact, Eck said, the rate of litigation among Christians is no lower than among non-Christians.

Eck, a former malpractice lawyer for a large urban hospital and now national coordinator of CCS, was the main resource person at MEDA's Oct. 25-28 convention here. MEDA, an organization which works at helping Mennonite businesspeople keep faith and business close together, had chosen "The Business of Conflict" as the theme of this year's gathering.

Eck had much to say about conflict in general and lawsuits in particular but his sharpest words were for those who sue fellow believers. Lawsuits between Christians are clearly contrary to the teachings of Jesus and Paul, he said. Moreover they usually increase rather than decrease hostility, they contribute to congestion in the courts, they are expensive and they cost Christians many opportunities to witness to their faith in Jesus Christ.

Conflict itself need not be sinful, Eck said, but the way it is handled can be sinful. Disputes can be seen as a gift from God—"an opportunity to glorify God in the way you respond."

Christians in conflict frequently do not even bother to seek out other avenues of resolution, Eck said. In his home city of Albuquerque, N.M., there were $24 million worth of lawsuits between Christians in a single year, and in 90 percent of these cases the pastors of the parties involved were not even aware of the lawsuits.

The Christian Conciliation Service which Eck heads now has 40 local chapters nationwide, all of them devoted to helping resolve various types of conflict, including business, marital and congregational disputes.

A random sampling of the 300 in attendance showed that a good many Mennonites face litigation in their work, and many have been embroiled in legal disputes themselves. Few disagreed that the New Testament teaches Christians not to sue one another. Less clear was the appropriate procedure when the other party in the conflict was an unbeliever who wouldn't consent to churchly conciliation. It was also agreed that sometimes a lawsuit is the only alternative. Many insurance claims cannot be processed without legal action, and manufacturers are often wide open to product liability disputes, some members pointed out.

The convention theme was probed in other ways. Thomas Gumbleton, auxiliary Catholic bishop of Detroit, addressed one of the evening sessions on the urgency of cooling down the arms race. "We must refuse to legitimate the idea of nuclear war," he said.

Brethren in Christ theologian Ron Sider encouraged the assembled businesspeople to make Jesus Christ the Lord of their businesses and make peace through their work. Businesspeople need to share the gospel in their places of business, put their families ahead of their work, promote right relationships in their corporations and work for "shalom" in the public sector, which includes the realms of international economics and the arms race.

The convention also featured numerous seminars and workshops on procedures for mediating disputes, styles of leadership, communication on the job and using conflict as an opportunity for growth.

In the business session members were told that MEDA, currently with a total membership of more than 1,400, was a "financially healthy organization" whose membership contributions help "entice and leverage" government funds and grants for overseas development. In the past year U.S. and Canadian development funds channeled through MEDA have been more than three times the total membership contributions. Overseas, MEDA has been active in the marketing of "appropriate technology" to help small farmers in underdeveloped regions of the world. *Wally Kroeker*


## Partners wanted

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For further information, please reply in confidence to:
Medical Clinic
Box 698
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## Pastor needed

**Zion Mennonite Church,** Souderton, Pa., has an opening on their pastoral team. Position available immediately.

For more information contact:
Paul Musselman
c/o Zion Mennonite Church
Box 495
Souderton, PA 18964
(215) 723-4922 after 5 p.m.

**A study tour in Europe** of places connected with the Swiss Mennonite heritage and sites of general cultural and historical interest will be offered by Bluffton (Ohio) College in May 1985. The tour will be conducted by Delbert Gratz, librarian and historian at Bluffton College. People interested in the three-week tour should contact Delbert Gratz, Bluffton College, Bluffton, OH 45817, (419) 358-8015. Registration deadline is Jan. 10, 1985. The group is limited to approximately 30.

**At about 3:30 a.m. on Oct. 1,** five people entered the Electric Boat Shipyard at Quonset Point in North Kingstown, R.I., and hammered and poured blood on six Trident II D-5 missile tubes. A statement of intent was posted in the shipyard accompanied by a "Call to Conscience" describing various acts, treaties and accords of international, constitutional and spiritual law outlawing weapons of massive indiscriminate destruction. After 20 minutes the five were arrested. They are Jean Holloday, 54, Bill Boston, 26, Frank Panopoulos, 28, and Leo Schiff, 29.

**Jennis Hofer**, a Freeman, S.D., farmer, offered a plea of guilty to two counts of first-degree manslaughter Oct. 15, the day he was to have gone on trial for the murder of Freeman farmers Andrew Wipf, Sr., and Andrew Wipf, Jr. First-degree manslaughter carries a maximum sentence of life in prison without parole and a $25,000 fine. Hofer had been charged with first-degree murder. The plea bargain that led to the guilty plea resulted from the fact that psychological studies of Hofer showed elements of stress, personality characteristics and a mental situation which "tended to remove the element of premeditation," according to a special prosecutor.

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# workers

*Bill Block*, who has been pastor at Morden (Man.) Bergthaler Church, has been named staff person for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada's committee on ministerial leadership, effective in summer 1985.

*Colleen Braun* has become instructor in piano and music theory at Swift Current (Sask.) Bible Institute.

*Dave Dolman*, Evanston (Ill.) Fellowship, has begun a three-year Mennonite Central Committee term in Kingston, Jamaica, as director of a deaf education teacher training program. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from the College of Wooster (Ohio), a master's degree in deaf education from Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., and a doctorate in educational psychology from Loyola University in Chicago. He is the son of Margaret L. Dolman of Tulsa, Okla.

*Mary Entz*, First Church, Newton, Kan., has begun a two-year term of voluntary service with Mennonite Board of Missions, Elkhart, Ind., working as a registered nurse at a retirement center in Albany, Ore. She is a 1984 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. Her parents are Oscar and Helen Entz of Newton.

*Arthur* and *Helen Fast*, Sargent Avenue Church, Winnipeg, have begun one- to three-year MCC terms in Shenyang, China, teaching English as a second language. Arthur has a bachelor's degree from the University of Winnipeg.

*Steve Garboden* became vice president of administrative services for Mennonite Mutual Aid Oct. 1.

*Lorna Hiebert*, Bergthaler Church, Morden, Man., has begun a three-year MCC term teaching special education courses in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. She attended Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, and has a bachelor's degree in education from the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Her parents are Henry and Henrietta Hiebert of Morden.

*Entz*

*Hiebert*

*Jost*

*Lugibihl*

*Fasts*

*Nussbaums*

*Jerry Jost*, First Church, Newton, Kan., has begun a VS term with MBM working as a land management officer on the Choctaw Indian Reservation near Philadelphia, Miss. He is a 1976 graduate of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. His parents are Titus and Rose Jost of Newton.

*Bert Lobe*, Akron (Pa.) Church, has joined Mennonite Central Committee Canada as coordinator of overseas services. He served MCC as secretary for east Asia before coming to MCC Canada in September.

*Janice Lugibihl*, Arvada (Colo.) Church, has begun a three-year MCC social services term in Olongapo, Philippines. She has a master's degree in peace studies from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, Elkhart, Ind., and served two Mennonite Voluntary Service terms. Her parents are Frank and Louis Lugibihl of Bluffton, Ohio.

*Nevin* and *Connie Nussbaum*, Salem Church, Kidron, Ohio, have begun two-year VS terms with MBM in Mantua, Ohio. Nevin is serving with Portage County Industries, and Connie is serving as volunteer coordinator at Hattie Larlham Foundation. He is the son of Aldis Nussbaum of Kent, Ohio, and Delma Nussbaum of Charlotte, N.C. She is the daughter of the late Thomas

**The Catholic bishops of Guatemala** recently issued a pastoral letter condemning the violence which "has taken over in Guatemala." They cited kidnappings, disappearances, torture, massacres, massive displacements of the population and increasing raids on private homes. "The entire Guatemalan socioeconomic structure," they said, "has rested on the foundation of a subjugated and impoverished Indian people." (Indians form the majority of Guatemala's population.) "The only way to peace," they declared, "is through justice and fraternal love."

**"Thy Kingdom Come"** is the theme for the 44th General Conference Triennial Sessions, to be held July 21-27, 1986, in Saskatoon. Fourteen planning committees have been appointed from Saskatoon and area churches, with Delmar and Elsie Epp of Wildwood Mennonite Church as overall coordinators.

**The government of Taiwan** has limited the number of missionaries who can work in the country. The government told mission agencies they must restrict their personnel to April 1984 levels. Calling the limit a temporary measure, officials gave no explanation for the move.

# RECORD

*Ratzlaff*

C. and Anna Mae Whalen of Wooster, Ohio.

*Laban Peachey* became vice president of the newly created division of marketing services for Mennonite Mutual Aid Oct. 1.

*Helen Quintela*, St. Paul, Minn., has been appointed church planter for a one-year term by the Northern District home missions committee of the General Conference. She will work in St. Paul's West Side under the supervision of the St. Paul Mennonite Fellowship Committee, which is composed of members of Faith Church, Minneapolis and St. Paul's West Side community res idents. A student at United Theological Seminary in St. Paul, she also has a master's degree in education from Harvard University and a bachelor's degree in education from Queen's College, Charlotte, N.C.

*Lois Ratzlaff*, Mennonite Community Church, Fresno, Calif., began a two-year term with Mennonite Brethren Christian Service in Portland, Ore., in June. She works as a social worker for Oregon Developmental Disabilities Advocacy Center. She has a master's degree in social work from California State University, Fresno, and a bachelor's degree from Fresno Pacific College. Her parents are Ed and Esther Braun Ratzlaff of Kingsburg, Calif.

*John Rudy*, College Church, Goshen, Ind., will become eastern regional manager of the Mennonite Foundation in November. He will join Foundation representative *Luke Bomberger* in the Lancaster, Pa., office.

"Strength for Tomorrow" is an emergency appeal of **FREEMAN JUNIOR COLLEGE, Freeman, SD;** approved by the General Conference Mennonite Church.

**Spring floods, a late planting season and early frost, combined with a fluctuating farm economy, have created unstable economic conditions for FJC's local agriculture-based constituency.**

With the help of volunteers across the nation, FJC encourages congregations and individuals to pledge financial aid for growth and development. Further information will follow through bulletin inserts and churchwide contacts.

FJC seeks your support today for continued strength tomorrow.

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Freeman Junior College offers two years of Christian Higher Education from a Mennonite perspective which blend Biblical teachings with Liberal Arts programs, and with Career/Vocational programs equipping students for service to Christ and the world

# It doesn't get much better than this.

Dennis and Wendy Rohrer of Virginia Beach, Va., have their hands full caring for their handicapped son Greg . . . who at five years has the needs of a two-month-old. Wendy had cared for him, and for two-year-old Todd . . . until she became pregnant.

When Wendy developed complications four months into her pregnancy, she and Dennis knew they'd have to find professional care for Greg. They also knew they couldn't afford it.

Then they heard of a new program from Mennonite Mutual Aid—Funding Opportunities for Congregations United in Sharing (FOCUS). **The FOCUS grant matched gifts from several churches . . . resulting in a total gift of $1,800.**

*Photos by Francis Miller Jr.*

"Thanks to MMA and our church," the Rohrers comment, "we were able to find good care for our special Greg. And now we have another healthy son."

Wendy says, "We felt like members of a huge family . . . and didn't feel so alone. It doesn't get much better than this . . . thanks, MMA."

And thank you for participating in MMA programs . . . **sharing with other members of God's family.**

Mennonite Mutual Aid

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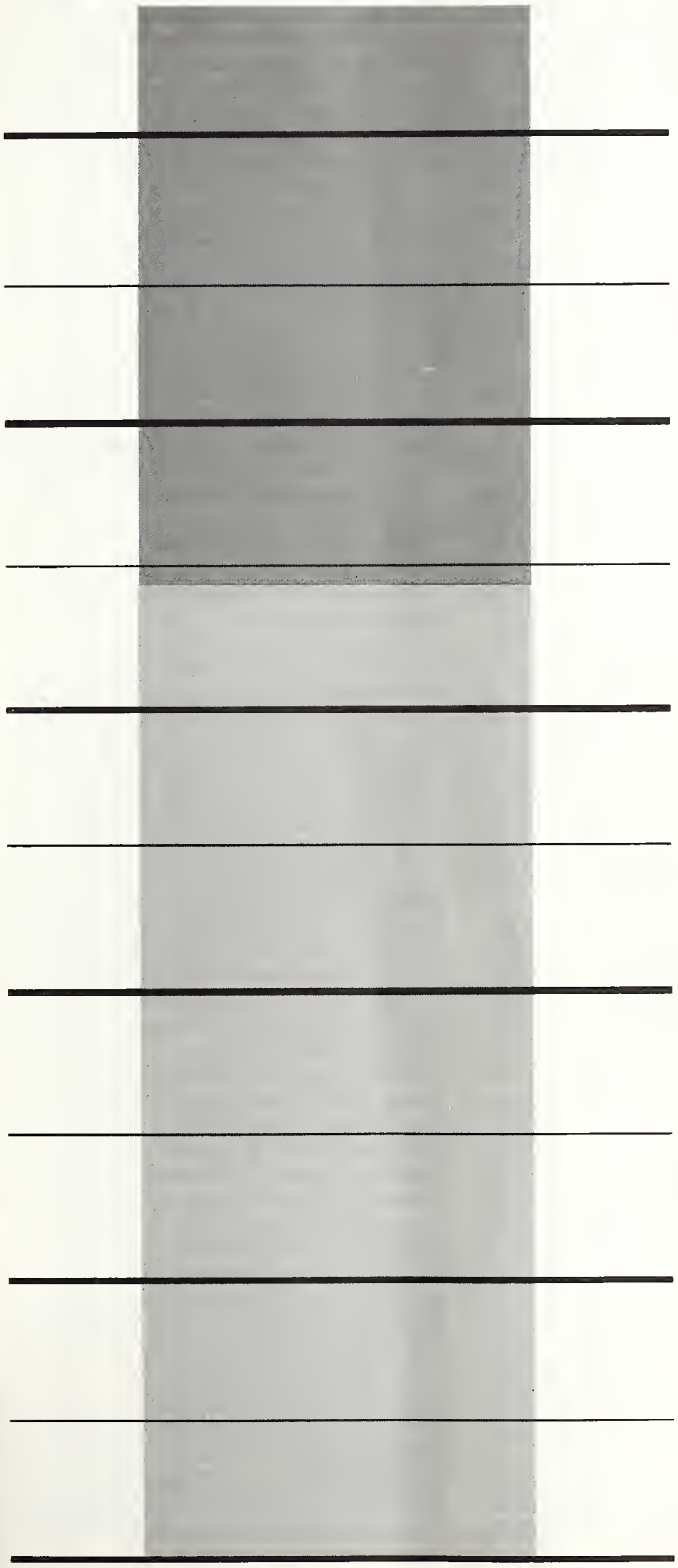
# Two million dollars.




No small sum. But it's the amount the General Conference needs to receive in the next 60 days to meet its fiscal year 1984 budget.

To date, we've raised approximately $3.4 million dollars this fiscal year. That's $3.4 million for Christian education in our congregations, for outreach and witness in Canada and the United States, for church leadership training, and for missionary work in 15 countries around the globe.

Yet with a budget for fiscal 1984 of more than $5.4 million, it still leaves us with a big gap to close before Jan. 31, 1985.

There's still much, much more for us to do together, both at home and overseas. New challenges in education, home ministries, leadership training and overseas mission confront us daily.

Remember conference staff, missionaries and their work in your prayers. And please give generously to the work we've set out to do together.

General Conference Mennonite Church

722 Main Street, Box 347
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**Immanuel: The Coming of Jesus in Art and the Bible** (Eerdmans, 1984) by Hans-Ruedi Weber is an invitation to rediscover—through artwork and meditative text—the original witness to the awesome event of God's entering the world as a vulnerable child. It is available in hardcover for $12.95.

Mennonite Central Committee has released a new slide set on grain shipments to three countries—El Salvador, Nicaragua and Mozambique. These are the focus of the **"Harvest Against Hunger"** in MCC's East Coast and Great Lakes regions. Contact MCC's Akron, Pa., office or a regional office to borrow the slide set.

Prints of a new half-hour film entitled **Strasbourg: City of Hope** have been placed with Mennonite Resource Centres in Manitoba and Ontario. The film was commissioned by Mennonite World Conference and produced by Daystar, Inc., a non-profit inter-Mennonite media production and marketing agency based in Henderson, Neb. Canadian inquiries may be addressed to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada Resource Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, (204) 888-6781, or the Ontario Mennonite Resource Centre, 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1, (519) 745-8458. The rental rate in Canada is $120. Reduced school rental rates are available.

**The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler** by C. Arnold Snyder (Herald Press, 1984) is No. 26 in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series. It is available in hardcover for $19.95 ($25.95 in Canada).

A three-color poster that reads **"Fervent prayer for our enemies is a great obstacle to war and the feelings that lead to it"** is available from New Call to Peacemaking, Box 1245, Elkhart, IN 46515-1245, for $1.

Southern Baptist teacher/missionary/journalist John Allen Moore in **Anabaptist Portraits** (Herald Press, 1984) puts into the hands of English readers practically all that is known about the life and work of six leading 16th-century Anabaptists—Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, Michael Sattler, Hans Denck and Balthasar Hubmaier. It is available in quality paperback for $9.95 ($12.95 in Canada).

Zondervan Bible Publishers have brought out three new Bibles. The **Comparitive Study Bible** is a parallel Bible containing the NIV, NASB, KJV and Amplified Bible versions. The **NIV Wide Margin Reference Bible** and the **NIV Pocket-thin New Testament** are also available.

**Marriages That Work** (Herald Press, 1984) contains first-person insights by Evelyn and Sylvanus Duvall, Cecil H. Osborne, Charlie and Martha Shedd, Richard C. and Doris Halverson, John M. and Betty Drescher, Paul Tournier, William E. and Lucy Hulme, David and Vera Mace, and A. Don and Martha Augsburger. It is available in paperback for $6.95 ($9.05 in Canada).

Originally written in 1889, **Die Chortitzer Mennoniten** has been republished. An early German history of the Chortitza Mennonite Colony in Southern Russia, it is available for $9.95 from *Die Mennonitische Post*, Box 1120, Steinbach, MB R0A 2A0.

**Confronting the Big C** (Herald Press, 1984) by Henry D. Weaver describes the reaction of Weaver and his family to the diagnosis of cancer. It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.75 in Canada).

Christians in the United States could virtually wipe out world poverty according to researchers in Champaign, Ill. In their book **The Hidden Billions: The Potential of the Church in the U.S.A.**, John and Sylvia Ronsvalle contend that if Christians increased their present church contributions to the 10 percent per capita level, $134 billion would be generated. As much as 60 percent of that money, they suggest, could be earmarked to support world missions. *The Hidden Billions* is available from C-4 Resources, 115 N. Neil, Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 398-2450.

**Nicaragua Under Siege** and **Guatemala: Tyranny on Trial** are new books available from Synthesis Publications, Dept. 130, 2703 Folsom St., San Francisco, CA 94110, for $8.95 and $9.95, respectively.

A study packet about acid rain is now available from MCC U.S. Peace Section, Box M, Akron, PA 17501. The packet includes a study guide to the award-winning film **Acid Rain: Requiem or Recovery**, which is available from MCC's audiovisual library.

In **Evangelical Is Not Enough** (Nelson, 1984), Thomas Howard describes his spiritual journey from being an evangelical suspicious of liturgy to seeing how it enables church members to actively participate in the act of corporate worship. It is available in hardcover for $9.95.

Reissued as a Clarion Classics edition, **The Power-Filled Christian** (Zondervan, 1984) is a study of the power that the Holy Spirit brings to all Christians.

In **Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings**, Douglas V. Steere has assembled a comprehensive collection of Quaker writings, including selections from the journals of George Fox and John Woolman, Thomas Kelly's *Testament of Devotion*, and the works of Caroline Stephens and Rufus Jones.

**A Humanizing Ministry** by D. Timothy Estes (Herald Press, 1984) calls the church to move in the direction of an open, integrated community which includes people with retardation as vital, worthwhile members of the body of Christ. It is available in quality paperback for $7.95 ($9.95 in Canada).

Edited by Aldred H. Neufeldt, **Celebrating Differences** (Faith and Life, 1984) challenges readers to a new vision of people who are different. It comes as a student guide ($3.95) and a leader's guide ($3.25).

**Discover the Covenant People** by Maynard Shelly (Faith and Life, 1984) is volume one of the four-volume *Discovery Bible Survey Course. Discovery* is a study of the historical circumstances under which the Bible was written and of the people who lived and wrote in the biblical world. Volume one covers Genesis 1 to the exodus and is available for $6.95.

In **Reconsecrating America** (Eerdmans, 1984), George Goldberg argues for a return to the original understanding of religious freedom as set forth in the First Amendment to the Constitution—for a "reconsecrated" America in which multisectarian groups are again able to express their religious beliefs freely and nonpreferentially. It is available in hardcover for $9.95.

In his latest book, **When Enough Is Enough** (Herald Press, 1984), David Augsburger analyzes the role hope plays in friendship, marriages, families and in our society as we face the threat of nuclear holocaust. Incorporating stories, diagrams, case studies and thoughts from well-known contemporaries as well as biblical reflections, Augsburger provides new perspectives on hope plus practical ways to apply it to life. It is available in quality paperback for $5.95 ($7.75 in Canada).

**From Bethlehem to Calvary** is the story of Jesus, a harmony of the four Gospels edited and arranged into a single narrative, a diatessaron, from the New International Version of the Bible, with duplicated passages eliminated. It is available in paperback for $7 plus

# RESOURCES

$1.25 postage from Ivan W. Brunk, 3421 Montilla Court, Sarasota, FL 33582.

American Christians for the Abolition of Torture, an ecumenical human rights organization, has released Part 2 of its **Study/Action Notebook on Torture**, containing biblical and theological reflections by a wide range of Christian leaders. The first part of the notebook, released in June, contained basic factual materials on torture and efforts to stop it, as well as suggestions for action and prayer. Those who order Part 2 will automatically receive Part 1 and Part 3 (to be released in the spring). The entire notebook costs $3.50, plus $1 postage. ACAT has also prepared a liturgy for Human Rights Sunday, Dec. 9, which can be ordered for $1. ACAT's address is 6117 Germantown Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144, (215) 849-7450.

**Be Not Afraid** is a 26-minute color film co-produced by Sojourners and the film's director, independent filmmaker Andrea Primdahl. It documents the events of Peace Pentecost 1983, when 3,000 Christians from throughout the United States gathered in Washington to witness against the nuclear arms race. The events ended in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda, where 242 Christians were arrested after a prayerful act of civil disobedience. For information on renting or purchasing a copy, write to *Be Not Afraid*, Sojourners, Box 29272, Washington, DC 20017.

Dorothy Hamilton's final juvenile novel, **Joel's Other Mother** (Herald Press, 1984), tells about Joel, who had two mothers in the same person—one who drank and one who began a new life because of Joel's help. Published posthumously, the book is available in quality paperback for $3.95 ($5.15 in Canada).

A **"Resource Listing of Mennonite Women,"** first compiled in 1978 and updated in 1983, will be revised in 1985. The Committee on Women's Concerns of Mennonite Central Committee is soliciting names and information for the update. To be included in the listing, submit no later than April 1, 1985, your name, address, church affiliation, occupation, education, experience and areas in which you are willing to serve as a resource. Send to Committee on Women's Concerns, MCC, Box M, Akron, PA 17501.

**Anabaptism and Mission** (Herald Press, 1984), edited by Wilbert R. Shenk with chapters by Franklin H. Littell, Cornelius J. Dyck, John H. Yoder, José Gallardo and others, is number 10 of the Missionary Studies Series. It is available in quality paperback for $11.95 ($15.55 in Canada).

# LETTERS

## Technology has two sides

When my father used to plow with horses, the team had to rest 15 minutes of each hour, and Daddy rested also. Then he got a tractor that needed no rest, so he worked 60 minutes of each hour. What's more, the tractor had lights on it so Daddy began plowing at night also. The new machine, ironically, enabled and therefore caused him to work harder than he did without it. And I'm not sure Daddy was any happier or that the quality of life in our family was any richer with the advent of the tractor. Technology has a way of becoming our master. Once set in motion, we often can't control it. Because it enables us to do more, we try to do all it allows.

In their articles on computers in the home and church (July 17 and 31 issues) Anne and Ken Rupp make an attempt to suggest what to do with all the extra time and energy available now that we have the computer. I wish that could have been the most significant part of the article, but it came through rather weakly. They do suggest that maybe we will have more time to share with our families and our churches.

I am not convinced. Rather than giving us more time for church or family or any other noble enterprise, I suspect our computers will only enable us to go faster and try to do more. I fear we won't have the discipline not to. I suspect our lives will become busier, more complicated, less people-centered, of a less satisfying quality, and we will end up with less time for meditation and contemplation—thanks to our computers. *Fremont A. Regier, Box 33, Gaborone, Botswana, Africa*

Oct. 26

## Time is running out

Ron Sider's address to the Mennonite World Conference at Strasbourg included many exciting concepts and a call for action. The reality of the current situation in Nicaragua and the increased actions by the CIA-backed contras does not leave time for hesitation.

A recent trip to Nicaragua with Witness for Peace has left me with the conviction that people of faith are being called to a new way of thinking—a turning from washing our hands and telling our government, "Do what you wish, we are not responsible," to an active realization that our God is a God of justice and life. He is the same God our brothers and sisters in Nicaragua worship, and our faith is dependent on living out this reality in the world.

Perhaps it is our turn to climb the tree, as Zacchaeus did, to see Christ alive in our Third World brothers and sisters, to dine with Jesus and then return to the people their right to self-determination, self-respect, life and the fruits of their labors.

Are the first steps of Sider's peace army the clear calling to our governments to cease continued attacks on the people of Nicaragua and to instead support the people in their efforts to produce food, improve health and education? *Gay Freeman, 10341 W. 59 Ave. #3, Arvada, CO 80004*

Oct. 29

*Note: Below is a photo of a granary at Ocotol, Nicaragua, damaged in a June 1 attack. The photo was taken during our vigil on June 23.*

# Mennonite Men revived by Tenth Man

*David Shelly*

Less than two years ago Mennonite Men—at the General Conference level—was all but obsolete. They were a group with a noble past vision but no current programs and no apparent future.

"Until I heard I was going to be president, I didn't even know the organization existed," says Irvin Voth of rural Goessel, Kan., one of several people now dedicated to pumping new life into Mennonite Men.

At the same time, GC church planters were struggling with potentially lost mission opportunities. New churches were forming, growing and getting excited about spreading the gospel in the inner cities, but they lacked finances for capital needs.

From the union of these two concerns, the Tenth Man Building Plan was born. Adopted by Mennonite Men at Bethlehem '83, Tenth Man calls for naming a contact person in each United States GC congregation who will recruit one donor for every 10 active adult males in the church. Each donor will be asked to commit $100 twice a year to help young churches build or buy facilities.

The Tenth Man idea is an adaptation of an old European village system of organization used by Mennonites in Russia. Each village had a "schultze" or mayor, and he had one assistant for every 10 adult males in the village.

The first Tenth Man project is to help the San Francisco Chinese Mennonite Fellowship purchase a three-story building to remodel as a meetinghouse and community outreach center.

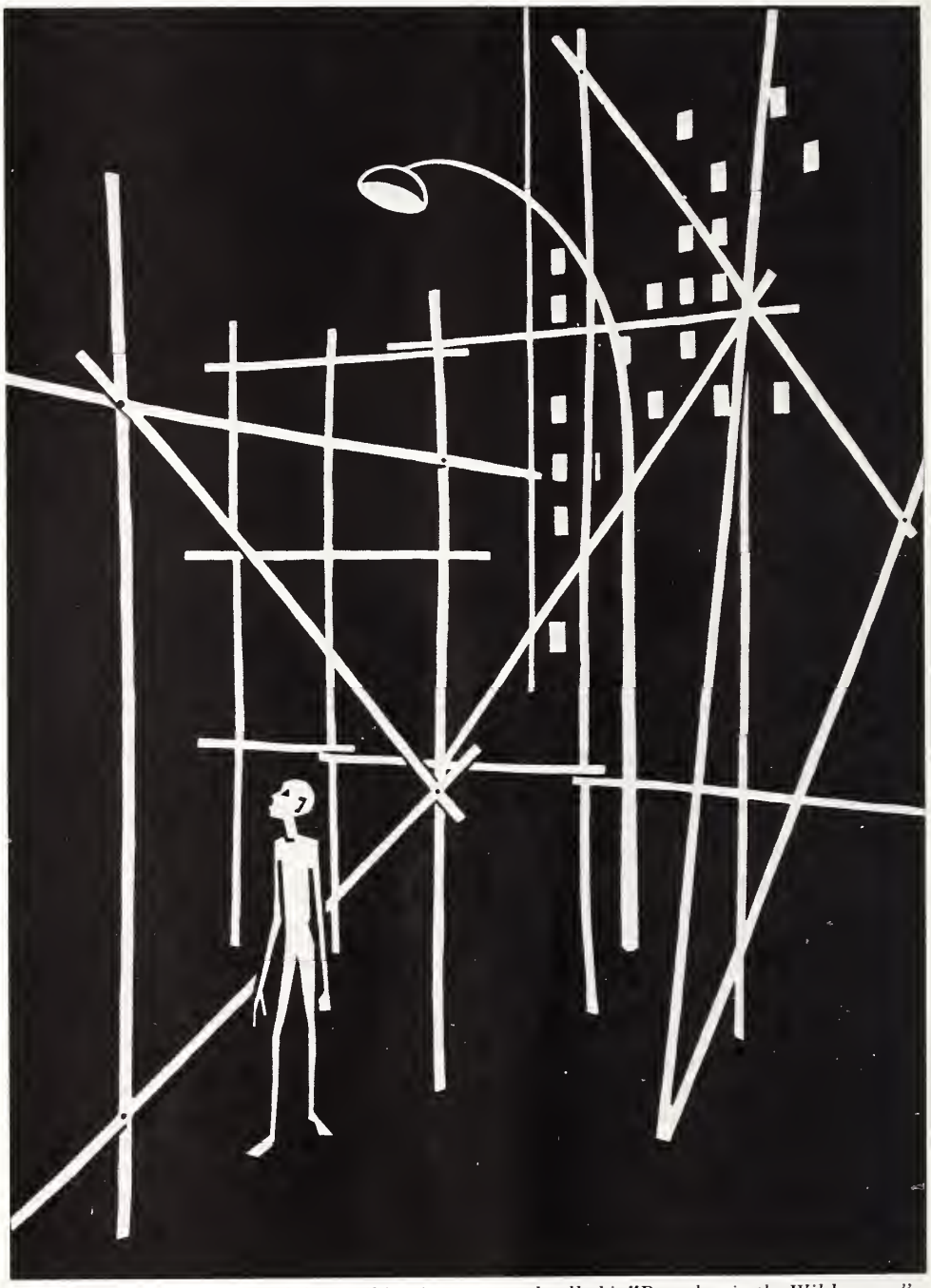
Churches needing help through the plan will often be new Christians of minority groups—Hispanics, Chinese and Vietnamese. The GC church planting committee headed by Don Yoder will decide which congregations to help. Then Mennonite Men will notify Tenth Man participants.

Tenth Man has been approved for a three-year period. Voth says, "We'll probably need most of the first three years to build up to our target of 500 participants." He sees this as only a beginning.

Approximately 200 members have signed up to date. Though men are the primary target group, Voth says Tenth Man is also open to women, couples, Sunday school classes and other groups.

Women already have Women in Mission through which they support conference causes. Their 1984 budget is $250,000. Even when Tenth Man reaches its goal of $100,000 a year, the amount will be modest compared to the women's effort.

"The women are so organized," says Voth. "The men usually have supported short-term projects. If a farmer had bad luck, they turned out for a day to help. The Tenth Man plan is a new idea for men."



*Artist Herbert Seidel created this striking imagery and called it "Preacher in the Wilderness." It seems a relevant message for a church planting program.*

Though new, the idea is a logical extension of time-honored traditions, comments sociologist J. Winfield Fretz in a brochure: "Mennonite Men is . . . expressing mutual aid in an urban context as a counterpoint to the barn raisings, neighborhood harvesting crews and husking bees of a former day."

Tenth Man is geared toward U.S. members. The Conference of Mennonites in Canada has a different plan to aid new congregations. Voth suggests that the 1986 triennial sessions in Saskatoon might be a good time to dialogue with Canada's men.

Tenth Man is seeking new money, not competition for funds already going to conference and conference-related programs. It is trying to find people not already committed to special conference causes, but who will be attracted to personal, evangelistic opportunities in new places.

"Here we are speaking God's Word in the large cities," notes Voth. "My feeling is that this is a major mission field today, a real challenge."

Voth expects Tenth Man to reap many benefits for all GC churches as participants become aware of the needs, then pray and personally visit the churches being assisted.

"We thought at first that we may be asking for too much money. But if people give $100 they become interested, they want to know what's happening, they want to be informed."

Tenth Man records are kept by Mennonite Men's secretary-treasurer, David Quiring of Henderson, Neb., with the aid of his personal computer. Quiring agreed to stay on an extra term to help implement Tenth Man. He had a key role in sparking the vision for the revival of Mennonite Men.

The 1950 GC triennial sessions in Freeman, S.D., launched Mennonite Men to draw its members "into a more intimate fellowship so as to develop spiritual strength for Christian service in harmony with Mennonite teachings, in the local church and community as well as through any or all channels which our General Conference offers."

A key early thrust was the founding of Mennonite Boys League, designed for boys 9-14 and administered by a Boys' Work Committee. However, over the years projects at the conference level dwindled. "A committee met every three years at General Conference sessions but recently had no projects," comments Voth.

While the Tenth Man Building Plan is contributing to a rebirth of interest in Mennonite Men at the conference-wide level, Mennonite Men has continued to function successfully in several districts. For instance, each year at Northern District Conference sessions a program features a speaker and a business meeting. This year they budgeted over $11,000 for Christian Bible camps, Mennonite Disaster Service, bookrack evangelism and scholarships to needy students in Mennonite schools, says LaVerne Graber of Freeman, district Mennonite Men president.

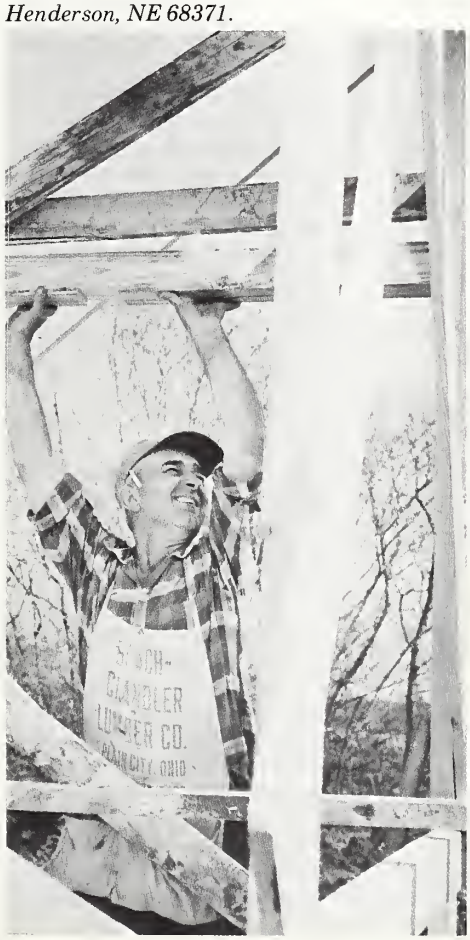
Western District Mennonite Men sponsor a workshop each February and a retreat for men and boys in April. The largest share of its budget is for district students who attend Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Ten have been approved for assistance during the current fall term, reports president Irvin Pauls of Buhler, Kan.

At the local congregational level, women's groups are generally better organized than men's groups, which contributes to difficulty in promoting Tenth Man at the grass-roots level. "Person-to-person contact is needed," says Graber, to make such programs work.

Irvin Voth hopes that this article might be part of that contacting process throughout our conference.

*David Shelly is the assistant editor of* Mennonite Weekly Review, *Box 568, Newton, KS 67114.*

*Advent is a time of promise and hope. We can help build hope for new churches by supporting the Tenth Man program. Write: Mennonite Men, Route 1, Box 118, Henderson, NE 68371.*



## Count me in!

### I want to be a Church Planting Associate.

To help plant Mennonite churches that have a strong witness to Jesus Christ, I want to give $100 when called upon, up to twice a year.

This is a step of faith rather than a pledge to help brothers and sisters in Christ. If the Lord does not make it possible for me to respond with the expected gift, I will try to be responsible to share the challenge with others who might make the needed contribution.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Return this card to David Quiring, Treasurer
Mennonite Men
Rt. 1, Box 118
Henderson, NE 68377

Congregation to be credited with this gift

_____

# books

## The Bible and ethics

**New Testament Social Ethics for Today** *by Richard N. Longenecker (Eerdmans, 1984, 108 pages) and* **The Great Reversal: Ethics and the New Testament** *by Allen Verhey (Eerdmans, 1984, 246 pages)*

*Reviewed by John Howard Yoder, professor of theology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556*

These two books complement one another. Longenecker, known for thorough New Testament studies, paints here in broad strokes, unfolding his three major chapters from the three reconciled polarities of Galatians 3:28. Verhey, whose previous work was on ethical method, presents in 150 pages a content synopsis of the entire ethical substance of the New Testament.

Both are worried, Longenecker in his first 15 pages and Verhey in the last 50, about recent ethical theorists' discussions of method and what it is we properly can draw from the Bible for contemporary ethics. Both resolve that question in moderate, mediating ways. Both insist that the social component of New Testament ethics is intrinsically necessary, not just added on, and make that case for readers for whom it needs to be argued.

Verhey has thorough annotation, Longenecker none. Both avoid concrete, contested, contemporary debates like war or homosexuality, or historical ones like Constantine, Verhey by sticking to New Testament description and Longenecker by sticking to his three reconciled polarities. Thereby they give the entire discipline a rather bland profile, despite Verhey's strong title. They are less interesting, therefore, than Willard Swartley's *Sabbath, Slavery, War, Women*, but also by that token they convey a stronger confidence that affirmative moral guidance can be expected from the Scriptures, even in modern times.

## Illuminating Christmas

**Immanuel: The Coming of Jesus in Art and the Bible** *by Hans-Ruedi Weber (Eerdmans, 1984, 122 pages)*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, assistant editor*

This handsome coffee-table book makes a beautiful Christmas gift—not only because of its artful design. The contents are instructive and challenging as well as pleasing to the eye.

Hans-Ruedi Weber, a Swiss Reformed pastor, has been director for biblical studies at the World Council of Churches since 1971. His skill as a New Testament scholar blends well with his broad acquaintance with art that relates to biblical themes. His earlier book on Jesus' crucifixion, *On a Friday Noon*, was set up similarly, using two approaches. He explains in his introduction to *Immanuel* that "first, discoveries made in Bible studies about the beginning of the four Gospels; secondly, visual interpretations of God's coming among us, provided by artists from many centuries and cultures" have guided his meditation.

The written text, which examines the prologues to the Gospels of Mark and John as well as the birth and infancy narratives in the Good News according to Matthew and Luke, is illuminating, full of interesting nuggets that those preaching will find especially helpful. The artworks, reproduced in full color, have been selected for their ability to shed new light on the too-familiar Bible texts and stories. In every respect a worthwhile book.

## Understanding cancer

**Confronting the Big C** *by Henry D. Weaver (Herald Press, 1984, 77 pages)*

*Reviewed by Lois Deckert, 6 Emerald Court, North Newton, KS 67117*

Henry D. Weaver in this easily read book has provided readers with an evening of understanding. This is a personal account of one family meeting with cancer, trying to understand its workings and finally triumphing over the debilitating effects.

Weaver has interspersed his writing with short pieces by his family members. He points out that cancer is a disease that affects more than just the patient; therefore, his family has been given space to express themselves as well. The line drawings were done by his 91-year-old mother.

Being a scientist, Weaver approaches his illness with a kind of cause-and-effect logic. Nevertheless, he sees other aspects which are not easily communicated through statistics. He recognizes the role of attitude and expectation in healing. He emphasizes the power of prayer and of support groups.

After reading this book it would be hard to say, "Oh, poor Henry." There is no self-pity, no fishing for sympathy. It is a straightforward, factual approach.

This book is not a "how to be cured" book. Weaver recognizes the individuality of the Big C experience. On the other hand, it is helpful to someone with cancer to read and perhaps appropriate information and ideas from the book.

# film

## Life on the farm

**Country**, *a Touchstone film directed by Richard Pearce, written by William D. Wittliff, produced by Jessica Lange and William D. Wittliff*

*Reviewed by Gordon Houser, assistant editor*

Farming is a way of life for fewer and fewer people in the United States. The family farm is an endangered species, threatened by agribusiness and by grain prices that have risen very little in the past 30 years. Small farmers find themselves operating increasingly in debt, and the battle for survival—to hold onto the farm and the land—is a long and hard one.

*Country* tells the story of a farm family in Iowa who faces foreclosure by the government. What this crisis does to the couple (Sam Shepard and Jessica Lange) and their family is played out in heartrending detail. The tensions in the family and in the rural community are portrayed with subtlety, yet powerfully. The scenes on the farm, in the house, in town, feel familiar to any who have been in a rural environment.

The film sparks both anger at social injustice and sadness at the pain these bewildered people face with their stoic individualism. It offers a glimpse of the power of social protest, but even more it shows a way of life that is quickly disappearing.

# MEDITATION

## She wanted more

Finally the grownups had finished clearing off the remains of a massive Christmas dinner and were assembling in the front room by the tree. The little ones could hardly stand the excitement any longer. They tore into the packages.

Holly's face was red and strained. She breathed rapidly. "Is this all?" she kept asking in a whining voice as she sat amid two Cabbage Patch dolls and their lounge chair, a Fisher Price doctor set, Lite Brite, two stuffed Care Bears—one small one and the large deluxe model, three Richard Scarry books, new slippers, a Mickey Mouse talking telephone and five Strawberry Shortcake replicas. "Is this all?"

Hers was not a selfish question as much as a plea not to have to cope with anymore. Wildly she fingered one toy, then another, with a false and insecure smile on her face. There was too much color, too much variety. And how does one decide whom to thank first or what to play with next?

The grandparents tried to hide their appalled expressions behind, "She must be tired. Such a long trip yesterday."

Still, puzzlement showed through. Why would a little girl with 10 times as much as her mother ever had want more?

Yes, she wanted more. More peace, more quiet, more meaning, more explanation about what Christmas really symbolizes. More time on father's lap, more singing, more Bible reading, more prayer, more experience of the love, praise and peace that is Christmas.

*Helen Rose Pauls*

## Another Christmas idea

In many isolated villages in Laos there are no schools or teachers. Students must walk long distances to school or live away from home to attend school. Educational materials are difficult to find and very expensive. "In this setting, receiving a brand new school kit means much more to a child than it ever could mean in Canada and the United States," says Linda Gehman Peachey, MCC worker in Laos.

Making school kits for about 40,000 to 50,000 children is the goal of an MCC Christmas-New Year Drive. These kits will go to children in three remote provinces where educational resources are most in need.

The ideas of sending school kits came when Bert Lobe, then MCC secretary for East Asia, visited Laos last spring. "The poverty of Laos is overwhelming," he observed. Noting a desperate need for educational supplies, Lobe and Titus and Linda Gehman Peachey laid plans for gathering school kits.

Laos is one of the poorest countries in Asia. Much of its suffering still stems from the Indochina War. Laos was devastated by U.S. bombings from 1964 to 1973, when 2 million bombs were dropped, according to official U.S. statistics. And Laos has received little outside aid since then. The United States and Canada have both restricted aid to Laos.

MCC programs in Laos since 1975 have included assistance to villages populated with handicapped people, aid to a leprosy village, and sending supplies to provincial agricultural schools and teacher training schools.

The MCC school kits for Laos will contain two pencils, a pen, a ruler, two composition books and an eraser in a drawstring bag.

For instructions on how to put together a school kit or to borrow a slide set on the Laos needs contact any MCC office.

# CONTENTS

Advent means coming. The Bible speaks of Jesus' coming among us as the greatest advent of history. In Advent God sends hope.

The hope of Advent can be seen in many ways. Hope through the prophet Ezekiel, through refugees, in the wisdom literature, in student ministries, in church planting and in the Oct. 26-28 Dialogue on Faith.

This issue is dedicated to Advent 1984.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# editorial

## *Not a question of liberal and conservative*

About 200 GCs met at Camp Wonderland, Camp Lake, Wis., Oct. 26-28 for a Dialogue on Faith. There was much more talking and telling than dialogue. And it grew ever clearer that we'll need to tell even more *before* we can dialogue.

Dialogue implies enough comfort with one another that we can casually exchange ideas and opinions. It suggests mutuality and common purpose.

Our diverse General Conference family has somehow gotten out of touch. Some don't trust some others and both are not sure why we should then hear and share other people's beliefs, ideas and feelings.

Old labels, long outdated—liberal versus conservative—created barriers and resurrected old skeletons at the dialogue. Our GC diversity cannot be explained by those concepts.

Advent is a time to consider our expectations and preconceived notions. It is easy to read Matthew and Luke and to think the birth stories must be central to the gospel. Our Christmas programs will likely reflect this fascination. It tends to make Christmas into a cuddly time of fluff.

Pondering on our GC Dialogue and reading the openings of all four Gospels, Mark and John especially, it hit me again like a ton of bricks. The gospel is about Jesus Christ, God's Son, coming among us to save us from our sins. That is no cuddly fluff but the key and heart of abundant life that has hope for eternal life.

Several times at our dialogue I felt confused. The warming presence of God's Spirit was there but then got pushed aside. We stopped short of the dialogue.

The Bible's Advent narratives help me to understand a little better.

John the Baptist cried in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. . ." (Matthew 3:3). The Christ-coming, the Christological event, is the heart of the matter. Advent and Christmas and dialogue are about Jesus and his meaning in our lives. That is the gospel.

"Prepare the way of the Lord" must be our theme if dialogue is to happen. It will come. Many people misunderstood Christ's Advent, yet millions have subsequently met Jesus for their salvation. We may have missed dialogue in October, yet many GCs will subsequently find cause to dialogue around the coming and meaning of Jesus among us.

To do our dialogue we must "make straight" some of the Advent paths. Labels like liberal and conservative must go. For example, some evangelical churches have ordained women long before mainline churches considered it. That is not a liberal versus conservative Bible interpretation issue.

There are more than two categories of people in our conference and in most other denominations as well as in most congregations. Some Christians tell of an indulgent Jesus. Jesus is credited as blessing their business or multiplying church attendance. They find it difficult to see Jesus in the persecuted of Central America or in open resistance to the military of the free world.

Many Christians make apologies for Jesus. They are not sure of any absolutes and fear propositional truth. Such people gladly confess to be "in process."

There are Christians who worship a fantasy Jesus. They confess a Jesus akin to Superman but tell of him as if he is a well-domesticated pet under their control. The challenge then is to correct their erring brothers and sisters.

All Christians have trouble with *our* Jesus. As one pastor shared at Dialogue on Faith, at our GC seminary they looked at him askance because his daughter was attending Grace College of the Bible. At Grace they looked askance at his daughter because her parents were at Mennonite Biblical Seminary. Jesus is greater than both schools.

Our GC diversity could also be examined from other perspectives. All I'm saying is that even Christologically there are more than two viewpoints.

Dialogue tells me that we must prepare the way of the Lord—to work for dialogue on our Christology. Without labels, let's together study the Bible and prepare for the transcendent Jesus who wants to dwell among us as God's Son and our Savior.

I'm glad that our GC family is planning such an opportunity for next year. Advent is old yet always new.

*Bernie Wiebe*

THE MENNONITE

OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO ONE LAY THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS JESUS CHRIST

99:26 DECEMBER 18, 1984

# It was Christmas

*Helen Rose Pauls*

The invitation to dine was given.

Uncles uncomfortable in three-piece suits stopped their leisurely conversations and ambled to the table.

Aunt Tina, in dark blue crepe and at her corseted best, gracefully took her place next to Uncle John.

Aunt Tillie forgave Aunt Martha her quarrelsome children long enough to hug her sister warmly.

Granma blinked back a tear as she saw her middle-aged sons, Albert and Henry, shelve their feud for the day and clasp each other.

Uncle John greeted his shorn nephew and decided that perhaps there was hope for his future.

Even Aunt Esther overlooked Heather's heavy makeup long enough to inquire politely about college.

The children were strangely quiet.

Grandad regarded his large family thoughtfully. He opened his Bible to Luke chapter two. The magic circle of faces around his table beamed up at him as he read.

A common spirit surrounded them all and for the moment they were united: one in the bond of love.

The cadence of Grandad's voice rose and fell:

> "Glory to God in the highest.
> On earth Peace.
> Good will toward men."

It was Christmas.

MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY ELKHART LIBRARY

*Gary Harder*

# The morning aft

"Look for a sign," they said. "God will give a sign." Long overdue, I would think. We've been praying, crying, begging, pleading for a sign from God. God has abandoned us. Maybe he is sitting on his throne up there somewhere in heaven blissfully ignorant of the mess his "good" creation is in. He doesn't visit the earth often. A sign, that's all we want. A sign to let us know God hasn't forgotten us, that he sees and knows what our life is like. A sign that would tell us, "I, the Lord God, am still active in the world. I am a saving God. I am who I am. Do not be afraid. I am God."

They said there was such a sign last night. False hope, no doubt. Some stupid shepherds going on about angels and about a baby born in Bethlehem to a peasant couple, saying he was the Son of God. Every baby born—every male baby—is a son of God. Well, maybe all peasants need visions of grandeur now and then, some escape from reality—God knows their life is hard enough—but they don't need to get the whole town excited about it. Next thing you know we'll have the Romans nosing around again.

Speaking of which, that's why we need the sign so desperately. You know what they've done now, don't you? Caesar Augustus and his cursed census. The whole miserable Roman empire *enrolled*—all on their lists. Filed, notified, taxed—forever on their lists. Once you're on, you never get off again. It's just the next step in their control over our lives. We are just another cipher forever to be taxed. But if you're not on their lists, you're worse off yet—you don't exist. With no identification you can't live. "Everyone will please be so kind as to return to their ancestral village in order to be enrolled." Or else!

My friend Ben Zadok refuses to do so. He will remain defiant to the end. He won't put his name down on any Roman list, not unless it's written with their blood.

We've often argued about "the sign," Zadok and I, and Shamiel and Ehron and Tobiah. We argue about whether God has given up on our world. We argue about what signs we're actually looking for. We argue about what kind of Messiah God will send. We argue and argue.

Zadok can see nothing but Judas Maccabeas resurrected. He sees blood in every dream. Daydream, nightmare, it doesn't matter, he sees blood—Roman blood. The sign will be another Maccabean warrior smashing the Roman might just as Judas drove out Antiochus Epiphanese and the despicable Syrians 150 years ago. He gets positively wild about that. "The Romans are Satan's agents," he says, "the most vile and evil force in our world. And there is only one way to deal with them." He says if God would only deal with that problem, life would be beautiful again.

The rest of us don't exactly disagree with Zadok, but we do see other things too. Shamiel says he is looking for a different sign. He insists God has promised a second Moses, a lawgiver who will tell

The sign we are looking for better be a sign that is pleasing and satisfying—one that will make us proud.

# r a sign

everyone how to live. "If people would only know how they should live and would have someone to guide them in doing the right things—living by the laws of God—then the new age of God would be ushered in and the Romans wouldn't really matter. "The root problem," says Shamiel, "is that people have too much freedom today"—a point of view totally incomprehensible to Zadok. But Shamiel has a point. The Roman thing is only an outward loss of freedom. Inwardly our people have too much. They do what is expedient to survive. There don't seem to be any absolutes anymore. Morality is not taken seriously. The laws of God are for private contemplation, but for public concourse you do what you need to do to survive. "A second Moses," says Shamiel, "is who we are waiting for—the Ten Commandments retold, reinterpreted, proclaimed. That is the Messiah we need."

Ehron says any amount of laws don't do any more good than more pigeons on the temple pinnacle unless we finally get a king to enforce them. "Anyone who is even slightly acquainted with Holy Scriptures," says Ehron, "knows that the Messiah God will send a king like one this world has never seen before. A king in the line of David, only more so," he insists. "The heart of the problem is that we have no sense of authority. Everyone does his own thing . . . OK, *her* own thing too. We Jews have no sense of final authority apart from the religious leaders. And all the authority they have is tradition and musty, pious platitudes. Another David would set things right. Iron authority. Make us a proud nation once more, a nation under God, a light to all the nations. The sign will wear purple robes and make us all proud again, and God fearing."

Tobiah is too polite to disagree with Ehron, but when he gets a chance, he talks enthusiastically about another prophet, like Elijah. I'm always surprised at that. A mild man like Tobiah gets stuck in one place in the Bible, but he sure likes the story of Elijah killing the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. According to him, our problem is a religious problem and has nothing to do with the lack of kings or the presence of Romans.

"Kings can't bring about religious revival," he says. "Only a true prophet can do that. The issue is our loyalty to God, our inward heart, not laws or Romans or outward authority. Any time another enemy conquers us, we take on their gods too. Where are our martyrs who remain loyal at any cost? Whenever a new religious idea comes along, we swallow it. What we're getting is religious indigestion," he says. "Be tolerant, it's the modern thing to do. Be open to new ideas. Why, we have so many gods in our bellies we've gotten ecclesiastical diarrhea and nothing stays down anymore."

Like I said, for a mild man Tobiah has some grit, and a way with words.

"We need an Elijah," he says, "to set our priorities right. Pledge total loyalty to Yahweh God and get rid of all the prophets of other ideas and false values."

It's all enough to confuse people. My friends all go to the Scriptures, and they all come out with different signs. They all picture different Messiahs, and they all trouble me, though I can't quite understand why. Each seems to catch only part of the promise of God. Each has its origins in our Scriptures. Why don't the pieces fit together? Why do each of those signs mean the destruction or defeat of someone? Can there not be a Messiah who can come as a blessing to all people, to both Jews and Romans?

And there is still this thing of last

night. Shepherds in unholy celebration (ever heard shepherds trying to sing?), visions of angels, and a baby born in some wretched stable. A Savior, they called him, Christ the Lord. Preposterous. And yet, why can't I dismiss the whole thing?

What have we got in this story? Bethlehem, a two-bit town; a young, poor peasant couple having their first baby; shepherds going on about seeing angels; a stable; a baby—it just doesn't add up.

**A baby.** Didn't Isaiah talk about a baby? Isaiah confronting King Ahaz? Ahaz so scared he's desperate. Resin and Pekah nipping at his heels. And Assyria ready to devour them all. Ahaz in panic looks for a sign. "What is the Lord's sign, Isaiah? What is the sign of our deliverance?"

Isaiah says, "The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)" (Isaiah 7:14). But that doesn't make sense, never did make sense. Ahaz is beset by Syrians and Assyrians and even cousin Jews, his own people are panic stricken, and Isaiah tells him the sign from God is a baby.

What kind of a sign is that? When things are dark and hopeless you've got to wait for a baby to grow up?

"Yes," says Isaiah, "a baby is a living sign from God." "For people walking in deep darkness, a light is beginning to shine . . . for to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. . ." (9:6). A baby. Immanuel: God with us.

That happened last night. Maybe I'm just letting those idiotic shepherds get to me. But today, the day after, our little world seems somehow to have a bit more light, a bit more love. A baby in a manger? Christ the Lord? I think I'll have another look at God's promise and. . . . •

*George Janzen*

# Peace on earth

A few years ago it was $400 billion. Now the universally accepted figure is $500 billion. That is the amount of money in U.S. dollars spent each year by the nations of the world on armaments and preparation for war. It would be more than $600 billion in Canadian currency.

Expressed in numerals, the figure looks like this: $600,000,000,000. That astronomical sum makes little sense until we break it down into more manageable amounts and into categories our minds can begin to comprehend. For example, this money could buy the following:

- 10,000 schools at $5 million each, *plus*
- 10,000 hospitals at $5 million each, *plus*
- 10,000 community libraries at $5 million each, *plus*
- 10,000 care homes for senior citizens at $5 million each, *plus*
- 50,000 churches at $1 million each, *plus*
- 500,000 homes at $100,000 each, *plus*
- 5,000 parks and recreational facilities at $10 million each, *plus*
- 5,000 concert halls and convention centers at $10 million each, *plus*
- 50,000 miles of new highways at $1 million per mile, *plus*
- 5 million scholarships for worthy students at $10,000 each.

Impressive? But that's not all. In addition to all of the above, we could sponsor 1 million scientists, agricultural specialists, food production technicians, forestry experts and others at an annual salary of $50,000 each to help the poor peoples of the world to help themselves.

And that is not all. There would still be enough left to provide a cash Christmas present of $2,000 for every man, woman and child in Canada.

You don't believe it? Take your pencil and figure it out for yourself. Add all 12 categories above and you get $600 billion. And since the governments of the world spend this much for military purposes every year, this could all be duplicated annually.

Isn't it about time that we common people of the world begin to let our governments know what we think of such unspeakable waste? O yes, I know the argument: "We have to do it because the Russians are doing it." Strange, several weeks ago I read something to the effect that the Russians think they have to do it because we are doing it. Why don't we both quit?

Now there is a good point. Why don't we both quit? They won't quit because we won't quit, and we won't quit because they won't quit. Sound ridiculous? It is ridiculous. The common denominator is a little three-letter word called *sin*. We can't trust each other. We are all equally self-centered, arrogant, mean and deceptive. We have the overkill capacity to obliterate all life on the earth 30 times over, yet neither side is willing to reduce its nuclear arsenal by one missile for fear that the other side would then have an advantage. They would be able to destroy us 30 times, and we would be able to destroy them only 29 times.

Once again it is the time of the Advent of the Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ commands us to turn our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks. In our day this would mean turning $600 (or $500 U.S.) billion into schools and hospitals and homes and churches. He wishes to lead us from our insane self-destructing course. He will guide our feet into the way of peace if we allow him to do so. He asks us to humble ourselves, to pray and to seek his face wholeheartedly and to repent and turn from our wicked ways. Then he promises to hear from heaven, to forgive our sins and to heal our land. Let us look unto him, all the ends of the earth, that we might be saved. •

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*Peter Stucky*

# Bethlehem in 1983

Zoughbi was riding the Arab bus between Bethlehem and Jerusalem toward the institute where he works one day a week. It was Sunday and, though the distance was only a couple of miles, he had to go through an Israeli checkpoint. The soldiers made the men get off the bus, demanded their documents and interrogated them for 20 minutes. They let this group continue, but some are turned back. Zoughbi was a Palestinian Christian and a student at Bethlehem University. Some time ago he spent 11 days detained in an old horse stable converted into a detention center by the Israeli military authorities. He was accused of "making trouble."

This checkpoint stood on the outskirts of Bethlehem and had the appearance of being temporary: a heavy iron frame with large spikes straddling one lane of traffic, a machine gun mounted on a truck, three soldiers armed with M-16 rifles made in the United States or Israeli-made UZIS and, a short distance from the road, a fourth soldier backing them up. In spite of its provisional appearance, the checkpoint was there almost every day. They stopped Arab buses, taxis and cars because Bethlehem is located in the territory occupied by Israel since 1967 known around the world as the West Bank (of the Jordan River) but called Judea and Samaria by the Israeli government. Before 1967 it was occupied by Jordan for 17 years.

Two thousand years ago the proud Roman legions nervously patrolled this land. At that time the subjugated Jewish people longed for their liberation. It was by decree of the Roman emperor, according to Luke's account, that Joseph and Mary were obliged to travel to Bethlehem to be registered. Local tradition has it they used the stony path directly behind the place where Zoughbi works as they drew near the village. The apparent purpose of the census was taxation.

Today the occupying forces are Jewish and the subjugated people Palestinians—humble local people, craftsmen, small farmers, merchants who speak many languages and who have lived here for generations. The tragedy is not simply that of living under foreign occupation, because for centuries they have had to live under various conquering powers. The tragedy resides in that the two peoples in question, Jewish and Palestinian Arab, are brother peoples—children, according to the biblical account, of the same father, Abraham. The tragedy is that a people who has suffered as much persecution, discrimination and death as have the Jewish people—who know what it's like to live in exile without a country and without land—is now willing to conquer, persecute, discriminate and take another's land by force. The State of Israel has already expropriated between 40 and 60 percent of the territory occupied in 1967.

*Bethlehem, the house of bread, has become a place of soldiers, guns and many other kinds of special security.*

Almost the entire population of Bethlehem is Palestinian: Christian and Muslim. For the Christmas season Manger Square is decorated with festive colored lights. Christians celebrate Christmas on three different dates, according to their particular calendars—Roman Catholics and Protestants on Dec. 24 and 25, Greek Orthodox and others on Jan. 6, and Armenian Orthodox on Jan. 18. It is celebrated by all with great ceremony and tradition. But for the Muslim and Jewish majority in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, Christmas primarily means an increase in commerce.

During this season, thousands of pilgrims arrive to visit the grotto venerated as the birthplace of Jesus. There is a mass at midnight on Dec. 24, but the local inhabitants cannot attend because the space is reserved primarily for visitors from abroad, and the control is strict.

The tourists arrive in luxurious European buses owned by Jewish tourist agencies. The guides are Jews because since 1967 it has been practicially impossible for an Arab to obtain a license as a tourist guide. That way it is easier to avoid the complexity and the pain of the local situation.

As they enter Bethlehem, the visitors pass by the tomb where, according to local tradition, Rachel, wife of Jacob, is buried. Before 1967, access was denied to Jews. Apparently they have determined that that will not recur. It is now guarded by two veteran Israeli soldiers sitting at the entrance. Across the

*The Bedouin tents dotting the Palestinian desert even today stand as stark symbols of the nomadic conditions in Israel.*

highway on a rooftop, another observes, vigilant.

The tourists arrive to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus whose arrival was announced by the angels as good news of peace and good will among the earth's inhabitants. But in the West Bank there is only an uneasy peace, a peace shot through by fear.

Shortly before Christmas in 1983 a bomb exploded on a city bus in Jerusalem, killing four Jews and wounding about 46. Days later, four bombs were discovered in Arab sectors of Jerusalem. Terrorism keeps the people on pins and needles.

Jacobo Timmerman, a Jewish newspaperman, immigrant to Israel from Argentina, where under the military terror of the past decade in that country he was arrested, tortured, jailed and mistreated, asks, "What kind of normality can there be when 3,500,000 Jews are prepared to turn nearly 2,000,000 Palestinians into second-class citizens, with all the cultural, social and economic degradation this means?" (*The Longest War*, p. 32).

Had the tourist the chance to roam beyond the Church of the Nativity, on the outskirts of Bethlehem, he or she would have seen a sad sight—a lot covered with the ruins of a Palestinian home. A boy from that home was accused of participating in stone throwing against a passing Jewish private on a military vehicle. The Israeli punishment for such offenses is the summary demolition of the family home, sometimes with all its furniture and goods. No legal trial is held.

A few meters ahead, also on the outskirts of Bethlehem, the edge of the Diheisha camp for Palestinian refugees begins. It is a humble neighborhood not unlike worker neighborhoods in any Third World city. It was established in 1948 when the State of Israel was proclaimed and 650,000 Palestinians fled or were expelled. Now, whenever there is a "public order" incident, they are among the first to fall under suspicion. Some days, when all the men of the camp are out working at their jobs, a curfew is imposed on the camp. When the men return from work, they have to look for places to sleep elsewhere because they cannot enter their homes. The curfew is severe.

A friend related how a pregnant woman opened the window of her house to look out. For doing this, she was beaten, knocked about, and she lost her baby. But what most impresses one is that all the entrances to the camp along the highway are sealed. The Iraelis erected walls six to 10 feet high and placed drums filled with concrete to block vehicle entrances to the camp as collective punishment for some transgression of the security laws. There are many such laws.

The Jews seek security. But in spite of all the security measures in the Holy Land, there is no peace.

In late 1983 the Bethlehem Peace Pilgrims arrived. They had walked some 7,000 miles along the roads of many countries for 20 months, bearing a testimony of peace. Their destination: Bethlehem. Two thousand years ago Jesus crossed a much greater distance to bring us a message of peace, for he left his throne in glory to be born as a Jew in a manger in Bethlehem in Palestine.

What changes would take place in this region, in the world, if people, if nations, acknowledged and turned over their lives and destinies to this King of Peace? If they followed this King, for whom service and sharing—not power and wealth—are what count? What changes would occur if all those of us who call ourselves followers of Jesus believed and put into practice his teaching, "Happy are those who work for peace, because they will be called sons and daughters of God"? •

*On the sea of Galilee, while special flags are flown for the tourists, the guests take time to read from the Bible about this Holy Land still so troubled today.*

# Life and limb are insured

*Calvin Redekop*

If your "good old days" in Sunday school were anything like mine, life insurance was one of the most controversial and overworked topics. That life and liability insurance is not a topic of discussion these days suggests it is no longer a relevant issue, that we have changed or that we are afraid to discuss it (it could even be a combination of all three).

The reason insurance was discussed a lot may have been that no members were agents, the companies were either secular or Presbyterian (or both) and the agents came from far away. But now there are members in our congregations who are agents, and there are members who own agencies. The topic has become even more complex with the emergence of insurance programs sponsored by our conferences. Even automobile insurance is now offered by organizations with paraofficial church status. However, we dub most of these programs "mutual aid"; this allays numerous concerns.

So why raise the subject of insurance? As I see it, when an issue is no longer raised, then that becomes a problem. It may be that *we* have become so inured to the conflict that we no longer see it. Or, as with drinking, materialism or egotism, we tend to ignore it because we do not want "to offend anyone."

This is not consistent with our Anabaptist tradition, which strongly stressed congregational discernment, discipline and even excommunication for transgression. The Schleitheim Confession, for example, states, "The ban shall be employed with all those who . . . slip sometimes and fall into error and sin. . ." (Wenger, *Glimpses of Mennonite History*, p. 208).

But I digress. Am I assuming that life and liability insurance is wrong? Not necessarily. If defined and structured as mutual aid, biblical principles may be applied. But it is not easy, and I know people who have been hurt in our own organizations. Many of the historical aspects of my heritage—the Waisenamt (care for orphans), the Brandversicherung (fire insurance), the Burial Aid (my home community of Mountain Lake, Minn., developed one of the earliest and most effective burial aids) and property insurance organizations—performed congregational aid and support.

We must apply biblical principles to the commercial aspects of insurance. I too have had (see below) ordinary life insurance and do have a term insurance policy and several retirement policies, all paid for by my employers. What possible objections can I then raise?

*How can we find assurance/insurance in a defenseless baby?*

1. There are the purely financial issues which ordinary life and the various liability insurances raise. This includes the way a pyramiding percentage of the premiums are siphoned off for agents, supervisors, managers, owners, etc. There is a reason why insurance companies are among the wealthiest financial institutions.

2. There are the questionable and high pressure techniques used to unduly pressure people who have meager means to get "adequate coverage."

3. There is the undue stress upon insurance as self-reliance and individualistic contingency against future events.

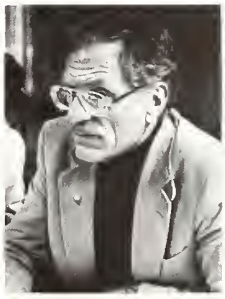
4. There is the pervasive "get-all-that-you-can-from-them" syndrome that the insurance ethos assumes and on which it thrives. Hazel Henderson, a brilliant social critic, understands this and says, ". . . in each of them (liability insurance, health insurance and Social Security) I see evidence of a systemic breakdown (of our society). . ." (*Politics of the Solar Age*, p. 326).

I do not categorically say that insurance is wrong. But the buying and selling of life/liability insurance is now an almost totally individualistically determined activity which reflects the last stages of a decaying society where people are pitted against people. The Christian fellowship is seldom considered in these decisions, nor do we discuss how the congregation fits into members' needs and life contingencies.

I am grateful for a Christian insurance broker who convinced me to drop an ordinary life insurance policy by showing me how bad a financial deal it really was. But the other aspects of the problem that I have raised above have not been discussed by my congregation for some decades now. What does the fellowship have to say about financial affairs?

Life and liability insurance is not the only issue about which there is little discussion or admonition these days. That makes the contemporary condition all the more problematic. For what does a congregation do when most issues are no longer "problems"?

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together, there I am in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). No doubt he was right, especially when the gathered members are singing Christmas carols or sharing the beauty of the Christmas pageant. But what if one member were to express serious needs to this group? Or what if someone were to question our insurance "securities"? Would Christ have to leave our celebrations? Would some of *us* walk out? Both?



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# Two Christmases

*Rosemarie Teichroeb*

*As we celebrate Christmas with all its special glitter this year, I will never forget that it was not always so. We learned the true meaning of Christ's coming in two special Christmases.*

I was born in West Prussia, close to Danzig (now Poland and Gdansk). We had a farm. I was about 11 years old on that Christmas in 1944. Things had become disturbing to all people around us. The Russian front was coming closer.

Refugees—old people, young people, children, mostly families without fathers (they were fighting in the war), their few belongings on horse-drawn wagons or just on hand-drawn wagons or just on hand-drawn sleighs, were fleeing westward from the Russian army. They came through our village streets, a steady stream of them.

Then came Christmas Eve. There was no church in the evening. We celebrated as a family—father, mother and we four children, as was the custom. As usual, we had to wait in a different room until the Christmas tree was decked out and the presents laid out, although there were few that year. At about 7:30 there was a loud knock on the door. We children rushed to open it and there was Santa Claus. He wore a Santa's hat and a mask in front of his face, but the other parts looked like our neighbor's boy, about 15 years of age. He had come from Berlin that summer to stay with his relatives, the Dycks, who were our neighbors (young people like him were sent out of the big cities to the country because of the bombing raids).

Soon after, our father asked us to put on our coats and we all walked the short distance to our neighbors, the Dycks. Mrs. Heidebrecht, a widow and the mother of Mrs. Dyck, greeted us at the door. In the room was young Mrs. Dyck with her two little boys—one about 4 months old and the other 2 years old. Her husband had been killed in the war just that summer. It was their first Christmas without husband and father. The young widow still seemed stunned by the loss of her loved one. My heart ached for her.

We played with the little ones and sang some Christmas songs. Then we ate a meal and went home.

On Jan. 24, 1945, exactly a month later, in bitterly cold weather we too put our bundles of clothing and some food onto wagons, hitched the horses and left our homeland.

After about 3½ months of wanderings, in fear of bombs and many hardships, we came to a village close to Hamburg, in northwest Germany. Father was killed in April of that year by low-flying fighter planes, so we too were alone with mother. We felt lost and bewildered in this part of Germany, which was strange to us. The people did not welcome us with open arms, which was understandable, for there were tens of thousands of us, and they were forced to take us in—into their living rooms and bedrooms—and many, though not all, resented that.

By 1946 we had made contact with the Mennonite church in Hamburg—Altona. It took us 2½ hours to get there, so we often worshiped with Lutherans closer to home. The stores were empty, and we could buy nothing. We had only the bare necessities to eat.

Then came Christmas 1946. We lived in an upstairs bedroom of a one-family house. That was our bedroom, living room and kitchen. In the middle of December we got word from Hamburg that mother, together with us three younger children, could come on Dec. 23 to get some things. I was sick and could not go, so mother went with my twin brother and younger sister.

My older brother was working and living in a nursery.

I was alone. The afternoon stretched awfully long into the evening. By about 9:30 I opened the window and listened to the night. Sure enough, I soon heard steps on the cobblestoned street. "Is that you, Mother?" I called down. The answer came, "Yes, it's us."

Ursula and Reinhard excitedly talked about a big Christmas tree, food and many more children. And each had to come forward and receive a Christmas bundle. And with that, mother opened her shopping bag and handed me a bundle wrapped in a towel. In it was a new dress, a new sweater, new socks and a small toy.

I had not had anything new for a long time, so this was a dream come true.

Jesus visited us that evening through a Christmas bundle sent by loving brothers and sisters from a country far away. He still visits us today.

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18).

What wonderful news even for 1984!

*Rosemarie Teichroeb, 24985 Robertson Crescent, Route 4, Aldergrove, BC V0X 1A0, shares the above as some of her "precious childhood memories."*

# A new but old story

*Leann Toews*

The rain pounded the pavement, making the exhaust from the cars and the mixture of cool rain and warm cement send a billowing cloud of steam into the air. It was Christmas Eve and the downtown area of that large southern city had more night traffic than usual as cars hurried to find a spot for parking in the surroundings of the great cathedral where Midnight Mass would soon be held.

People came out of fancy restaurants laughing celebratively as Christmas lights costing millions of dollars sparkled their commercial messages of Santa. The usual bums were mulling around trying to find their familiar respites from the rain. Their faces were no more grateful than before. The Christmas dinner they would get the next day at the local mission would hardly make an impression on them. Their lives seemed destined for failure.

A couple wrapped in an old but colorful sarape walked slowly down the main avenue. Underneath the sarape, where no one could see, they wore packs which held all their worldly possessions. Occasionally they stopped to look into the steamy windows of department stores where furs, diamonds, silver and gold were displayed. After walking many blocks, they found a protruding roof to sit under out of the rain. The lettering in the windows gave the names of all the executives that had offices in this building with 40 floors.

José comforted Maria as she sat on the damp concrete. They were young, but the weary days of travel and stress had carved age lines on their faces. Her body was bent from the load she had to carry. As they sat in the companionship of their silence, the door of the professional building opened. Out walked one of the business executives whose office was on the seventh floor of the glassed-in structure. He looked at the couple who had taken refuge in the front of his building, not wanting to acknowledge their presence.

At a glance he asked if he could be of any help, hoping that indeed he would not be.

José looked at the tailor-made suit, the silk tie and the pure leather shoes and said, "Do you have a place where we could spend the night?"

The businessman was not prepared for such a question. It was, after all, Christmas Eve. He reached into his pocket for some bills, only to remember that he had spent the last hundred for his son's Christmas present. "I own a vacant store front a couple of blocks back if that would help," he responded nervously. Maria got up first, then José. Together they followed the man back several blocks to an empty building they had passed earlier.

*Jerome Bosch's (1450-1516) painting "The Adoration of the Magi" speaks of that first advent in Bethlehem. Leonn Toews writes about modern-day Magi in any modern city.*

Inside the vacated store were some orange crates, old boxes and rags left from the days when the large room was alive with business. The room was not warm, but it was dry. Mice hurried about looking for new territory. An alley cat screeched outside the lopsided back door, thinking he might get a crumb or two. Pigeons sat on the ledge of the display window as if to get a glimpse of the new folks who had arrived. The animals sensed that something new was about to happen.

Christmas Day had come. José and Maria were grateful for the shelter of the night. It was not a fit place, but the rags and orange crate had been useful. The sun was shining through the display window, creating a warmth for those inside.

Later that morning Maria and José heard a knock at the front door. Before José had time to open it, in walked the businessman, his wife and two children. She was carrying a plate of Christmas goodies, and he had a thermos of coffee in his hand. The children gazed in disbelief as they saw Maria and José sitting on the floor of that dirty old building. Even more surprising was the tiny baby sleeping in the orange crate. It was wrapped in the old but colorful sarape. Both children moved quietly to the box and looked in awe at the baby boy inside. Carefully the girl removed the slim, gold bracelet from her arm and put it into the crate. Next the boy took from his pocket the silver money clip he had gotten early that morning. He placed it at the bundled baby's feet.

In the distance the clarion from the great cathedral was playing "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased." Maria hummed along as she looked at the baby. With a smile she picked up the tiny child and held him to her breast, then she offered him to the children to hold and love. They accepted the infant with reverence and joy.

*Leann Toews, Route 2, Newton, KS 67114, wrote this story for her family last Advent as part of their preparation for Christmas.*

# Partners

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*Faith and farming conference*

# Mennonite farmers organize for mutual support

Mt. Pleasant, Pa. (Meetinghouse)—Farmers representing Mennonite farming communities throughout North America, at the end of their first-ever conference Nov. 26-28 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center near here, decided to organize themselves to help each other.

The farmers' immediate concern was financial. Like many other farmers in the United States and Canada, they are suffering the effects of high interest rates and low commodity prices. Some are being driven off their land, including several farmers at the conference who are facing mortgage foreclosure and bankruptcy.

But there were other concerns as well: how Christian faith relates to farming, taking good care of the land, world hunger, preserving the family farm, passing on the land.

Planners of the conference, which was titled "Faith and Farming," were somewhat startled at the interest shown.

Nearly 150 farmers—many more than expected—showed up. They came from 13 states and three provinces and represented six Mennonite and related groups—Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren, Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren and Beachy Amish.

And dozens of local and national media people found their way to the retreat center. At one point, reporters and camera crews from four TV stations in nearby Pittsburgh and Johnstown—including one which helicoptered into Laurelville—were all vying for interviews at the same time.

*New York Times* correspondent Bill Robbins, who stayed for the whole event, said the media was interested in the conference because the current troubles of North American farmers seemed to be affecting even the Mennonites, who are known for their agrarian way of life and their success in farming.

The conference was the brainchild of former Laurelville executive director Arnold Cressman and others.

Also instrumental in organizing the conference were the two people who served as moderators—Bob Yoder, an Illinois farmer who also works for the Mennonite Church in the area of stewardship, and Robert Hull, who is peace and justice secretary for the General Conference Mennonite Church.

*Don Reeves (left), one of the major speakers, talks with Arden Ramseyer of the Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.*

"We are people of the land," said Iowa pastor Roy Kauffman in the opening worship service. "But now some of us are losing our land." He called on Mennonite farmers to boldly stand together and take charge of their own communities again. "The land belongs to God and we are his stewards of it."

Laurelville program director Levi Miller noted that although the percentage of Mennonites who are in agriculture has dropped in the past decade from 33 to 15, it is still much higher than the current U.S. percentage of 3. Participants agreed that Mennonites have much experience and expertise to offer North American agriculture in this crisis period.

Several farmers were asked to speak on the faith issues they face in their work. Leon Good, a dairy farmer in Lititz, Pa., listed six things that make him wince with pain: the temptation to accumulate assets, the temptation to arrogance ("look what my hands have wrought!"), loss of prime farmland ("will our final crop be asphalt?"), erosion of the soil, passing on the land to future farmers, and family problems resulting from financial pressures and overwork.

"It hurts to see people losing their farms," said Ted Eash, a pastor-farmer from Bristol, Ind. "It hurts to see good Mennonite families breaking up under the pressure and conscientious farmers ruining their health through overwork."

John Sikma, a leader of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, urged the Mennonites to organize themselves.

Gordon Hunsberger, a retired Mennonite farmer in Cambridge, Ont., and a member of the Christian Farmers Federation, presented five models for organizing Mennonite farmers.

A structure committee appointed on the first day of the conference then studied the models carefully and recommended a combination of two of the models: that a Farm Community Section be set up under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee much like Mennonite Disaster Service, with a strong emphasis on local initiative.

Conference participants approved the recommendation and appointed a nine-member continuing committee to work out the details and to keep the spirit of the conference alive.

A findings committee presented a "Mennonite Statement on Farming" to summarize the concerns of the participants (see below). *Steve Shenk*

## Excerpts from findings committee report

We hear a call for a return to community. . . . We have lost the awareness of each other and mutual aid is weak. We confess that we have become increasingly individualistic and independent. We need to recognize the importance of cooperation and mutual support. . . .

. . . We need to learn how to counteract the system which tells us farming means we can exploit natural resources for selfish purposes. Farming is rather a commitment to obedience, faith and simplicity. . . .

We are not sufficiently aware of the connection between global issues such as world hunger, world soil destruction, food costs, etc., and the way we live and farm. For example, our misuse of petroleum products in our farming practices is related to world hunger and world need.

We affirm the family farm. As an institution, the family farm can best ensure dispersed access to land, stewardship of natural resources and an equitable social structure in our rural communities.

## Pontius' Puddle

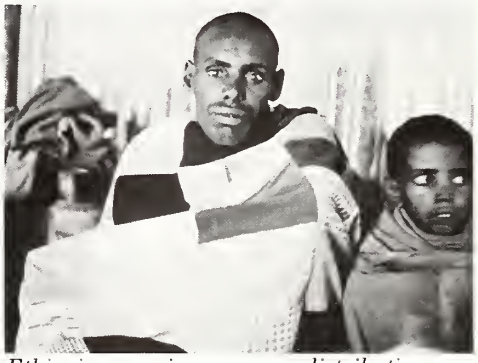
# MCC recommends supplementary response to Ethiopian famine

Akron, Pa. (MCC)—An appeal for blankets, continued food shipments and a commitment to long-term solutions for hunger are the main features of a supplementary Ethiopia crisis response recommended for the first half of 1985, according to Tim Lind, Mennonite Central Committee Africa co-secretary.

The response, valued at $3 million, follows the visit to Ethiopia and Sudan by Ray Brubacher of Elmira, Ont., former MCC Africa secretary.

The plan includes short-, medium- and long-term responses to the Ethiopian situation. Lind notes that "our submission of a six-month supplementary plan reflects the difficulty of knowing how and when other agencies will respond. It also reflects our long-term commitment to the region and our conviction that now is the time to address environmental and reconciliation concerns as well as immediate relief measures."

Returning from a three-week tour of the famine areas, Brubacher noted that MCC response has been timely and critically needed. Flour supplied through MCC arrived in Makele, Ethiopia, via Russian and British transport planes 15 days after relief rations had been depleted. "The timing of this arrival was providential and undoubtedly saved many lives," Brubacher reports. "It just felt awfully good to see that MCC name on the bags of food."



*Ethiopian man in camp near distribution center in Makele wraps in a blanket to keep warm. MCC is launching a drive to send 80,000 blankets to Ethiopia for displaced people.*

While emergency relief will continue to be required for some time, Brubacher says that food aid is only a short-term response to a complicated situation. "The obvious, urgent issue is peace and stability. This will require negotiation rather than bullets. Until this happens, there is little hope. Stability is a prerequisite to extensive programs of reforestation, agriculture and improved marketing systems."

An urgent appeal is being made for $210,000 and 30,000 donated blankets to enable MCC to send 80,000 blankets to Ethiopia. Two-thirds of this total will be children's blankets.

Five thousand four hundred donated quilts and blankets were shipped Dec. 3, and MCC is in the process of purchasing an additional 10,000 blankets that will be flown immediately to food distribution centers where many lack shelter. The remaining donated and purchased blankets will be shipped to Ethiopia.

The first week of December an additional 4,000 metric tons of MCC Canadian wheat worth over $500,000 was scheduled to leave Montreal for Ethiopia.

Other immediate proposed responses include funding for internal transport of food and $40,000 to finance the construction of a food warehouse in Makele.

The plan also calls for the purchasing of agricultural tools and training Ethiopians in small tool production in rural Tigray, Ethiopia. MCC would plan to purchase $50,000 worth of seed for farmers waiting for the next rains.

MCC is investigating the possibility of operating its own feeding centers in Ethiopia.

A long-term proposed emphasis for the MCC program in Ethiopia includes a focus on peacemaking as well as agriculture and environment programs. MCC is supporting efforts to end the Ethiopian conflict and is investigating involvement in programs to restore food production in Ethiopia.

This proposal is in addition to the ongoing MCC program related to the Ethiopian crisis. Seventeen MCC workers are located in Ethiopia and neighboring Sudan, which is home for nearly 750,000 Ethiopian refugees.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**The Mennonite Child Care Association** held its annual meeting Oct. 25-26 in West Liberty, Ohio. MCCA is composed of the executive directors of Adriel School, West Liberty; Argentine Youth Services, Kansas City, Kan.; Edgewood Children's Center, St. Louis; Grace Children's Home, Henderson, Neb.; Millersville (Pa.) Youth Village; and Salem Children's Home, Flanagan, Ill. It was formed in 1983 through the efforts of H. Ernest Bennett, executive director of Mennonite Health Association.

**The Mennonite Encyclopedia project** has found its focus, following a decision made by the executive council of the Institute of Mennonite Studies at a meeting of IMS associates Sept. 21-22 at Elkhart, Ind. The three-year commitment of IMS staffing and financing to produce a volume to extend and correct parts of the existing four-volume encyclopedia will continue—with exploration to locate an institutional base for the long-term project of total revision.

**"Hundreds of thousands of deaths** can be prevented" in drought-stricken African countries if President Reagan initiates a massive food airlift, a broad coalition of religious and relief groups spearheaded by Bread for the World said in late November. The U.S. response to that point, though "generous," is inadequate to meet the need, they said in Washington.

# IMCA seeks director, will promote area organizations

Cassopolis, Mich. (GCMC)—The Inter-Mennonite Council on Aging, in its semiannual meeting at Camp Friedenswald here, asked Martha F. Graber to continue as IMCA staff person for another year, through January 1986, and to initiate immediately the search for an executive director. Names of candidates will be presented for council consideration at the March 1, 1985, meeting of IMCA to be held in Boston in conjunction with the meetings of the Mennonite Health Association, the Protestant Health and Welfare Assembly and their subgroups.

The primary goal of IMCA for 1985 and 1986 will be promotion and assistance toward the development of geographical area church organizations on aging, working with conferences and established church entities rather than creating new entities. Supporting goals are the development of training programs for area leadership in aging concerns, the providing of area workshops/conferences for church groups and the publishing and distributing of a quarterly newsletter on aging issues that is targeted to area leadership.

These goals were developed through a long-range planning process guided by Kenneth H. Schmidt, resource person for IMCA from the Mennonite Board of Missions Health and Welfare Services in Elkhart, Ind. Other potential long-range goals identified were a possible "1988 National Conference on Aging" and participation in the 1989 joint assembly/conference of the Mennonite Church and the General Conference.

In other action the Council gave approval to early publication of a revised edition of *A Model to Assist Congregations in Their Unique Role in Ministry with the Aging*, a manual authored by Carl and Irene Smucker and originally published by Mennonite Central Committee. Three action committees were established: a vision committee for long-range planning, a visibility committee for publications and publicity, and a viability committee for financial planning.

After working sessions of the committees, reports were entered. The vision committee is chaired by Barbara Reber of Elkhart, council chair and Mennonite Church representative. Members of this committee are H. A. Penner, Akron, Pa., representing MCC; Shelly Weaverdyck, Ann Arbor, Mich., representing the General Conference; and Kenneth H. Schmidt, resource person. This committee will develop a job description and initiate a search for an executive director to begin at least by July 1, 1985.

The visibility committee was temporarily chaired by Dianne Springer of Elkhart, Mennonite Church representative, in the absence of Bill Loewen of Seattle, General Conference representative. She was assisted by Martha F. Graber of North Newton, Kan., program coordinator, and H. Ernest Bennett of Elkhart, resource person representing the Mennonite Health Association. This committee suggested a newsletter to be published quarterly beginning in 1985 and going to a limited circulation, including conference/district leaders and known resource people. The content could include factual information about the work of IMCA, about aging and about available resources, suggest guidelines for area development and report on related work being accomplished by conferences/districts, thus providing a networking function.

The viability committee, chaired by Carl Good, Akron, Pa., Mennonite Mental Health Association representative, is comprised of Marlo Kauffman, Goshen, Ind., Mennonite Mutual Aid representative, and Roger Ringenberg, Sturgis, Mich., Mennonite Health Association representative. This committee reported on its attempt to ascertain the impact on the 1985 budget of the Council decision to find and employ a new executive director. They considered possible options of securing an individual or couple on a voluntary service basis or of developing a salaried position.

In response to a request for reactions to a recent proposal for an Inter-Mennonite Great Lakes Council on Aging, IMCA affirmed the concept of a churchwide network of area contacts to work with congregations and affirmed the Great Lakes Council on Aging as a way of organizing area activities.


## Executive director/administrator

**Glencroft**, one of Arizona's largest retirement communities, is seeking an individual with proven leadership ability for the position of executive director/administrator.

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**Saskatchewan's Women in Mission** held its fall retreat Oct. 12-13 at Fort San in the Qu'Appelle Valley. "Exploring the Family Faith" was the theme of the retreat, which had 66 women registered. Speakers included Elsie Neufeld, Mary Enns and Irene Klassen. Esther Paetkau and Sylvia Regier told how to record one's family faith, Eleanor Funk spoke on "Passing on the Family Faith" and Justina Peters gave "A Story in Faith" in the form of a puppet show.

**The general secretary** of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was released on parole Aug. 15 after four years in jail. Chun-ming Kao was sentenced June 5, 1980, to seven years. He was accused of assisting Shih Ming-teh, a leader of a 1979 human rights demonstration who was later declared a subversive by the government. Three others jailed in connection with the situation were also released, according to a report from the Geneva-based World Alliance of Reformed Churches. They are Lin Yi-hsiung, Lin Wen-chen and Hsu Ching-fu.

**Outstanding scholarship and good-humored teaching** marked the sixth annual J. J. Thiessen lectures at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Oct. 23-24. Kenneth Bailey, director of the Institute for Middle Eastern New Testament Studies, spoke on "Jesus Interprets His Own Cross: A Middle Eastern Cultural Approach." He concluded that Jesus' theology is that God acts in a costly demonstration of unexpected love which is an opportunity for repentance to both lawkeepers and lawbreakers, who in turn respond with thankfulness in discipleship. The cross is the ultimate historic costly demonstration of unexpected love.

# Japanese church baptizes four new Christians

Beppu, Japan—The Beppu Christian Church, a Mennonite congregation here, baptized a young policeman and three mothers in a special service Oct. 7.

Akio Shiga was on patrol duty at the airport when members of the church first met him. The following year his father died. Later he came across a name card of the church and visited.

Taeko Yoshioka's introduction to the church came when her 8-year-old girl, Hisae-chan, was taken to the hospital one night. Taeko's younger sister asked the church to pray for the girl. Hisae-chan died two weeks later, but the family was so impressed with the response of the church that they asked for a Christian funeral. Then they began visiting the church, and Taeko became a Christian.

Mizuho Shuto seemed to have everything to make her happy: two daughters, a good husband, a modest condominium home, and in her spare time she taught piano and organ. Yet she was dissatisfied with life. A friend invited her to the church. Her husband came to the baptism—the first time he had been in a Christian church.

*From left: Taeko Yoshioka, Akio Shiga, pastor Peter Derksen, Kazuko Miyazaki, Mizuho Shuto*

Kazuko Miyazaki had been attending cooking and Bible classes. Then her stepdaughter ran away from home, and the mother came to the church for help. When she told her parents she was to be baptized, her father warned her husband that if he also followed his wife he would cut the family ties. Her husband didn't come to the baptism, but he brings their two younger daughters to Sunday school.

The baptism service lasted 2½ hours.
*Mary Derksen*


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## New leaders join media education network

West St. Paul, Man. (GCMC)—Seven new leaders have joined the Media Education Network upon completing a Television Awareness Training leaders' event here Nov. 2-4. The Media Division of the Commission on Home Ministries sponsored the national event. It also operates the network, which now numbers 15 leaders throughout Canada and the United States.

Launched in 1980 by CHM and Women in Mission, the network is designed to provide media education resources to General Conference congregations. Television Awareness Training has been the most notable curriculum, although other resources are offered or are being developed.

"Our goal has been to locate and train at least one media education leader in each district and provincial conference," states Barth Hague, network coordinator. "Our network is now nearly completely staffed."

Congregations throughout Canada and the U.S. may use the services of accredited media education leaders in their district or provincial conference. TAT provides resources on understanding television violence, advertising, how TV affects children and stereotyping in media.

For more information, contact Barth Hague, coordinator, Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370.

**"Peace is one area that has no cultural barriers** to women's solidarity. The whole of humanity wants peace," Margaret Papandreon, president of the Women's Union of Greece, told more than 800 participants at a conference in New York Oct. 12-13 on "The International Women's Decade and Beyond." Sponsored by the American Association of University Women and 59 other organizations, including Church Women United and the National Councils of Catholic and of Jewish Women, the conference was dedicated to the memory of Eleanor Roosevelt and coincided with the centennial of her birth.

**"Teaching the Bible"** is the theme of the annual Congregational Education Conference at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center Jan. 25-27, 1985. Headed by a resource team of Perry Yoder, Michael A. King and Karen Moshier Shenk, the conference will explore congregational Bible teaching in music, major addresses and workshops. For a brochure or to register, contact Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Route 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666, (412) 423-2056.

**Blacks Against Nukes** (BAN) on Nov. 19 announced a boycott of war toys for the Christmas season. The group is an educational clearinghouse founded in Washington in 1981. "Given the current tensions throughout the world and the fact that the black community has seen social service programs suffer extreme cuts due in part to an increased military budget, it would be ridiculous for a black parent" to buy military toys, BAN said.

# Commentary: exporting food surpluses not a simple solution

North American warehouses are full of grain. Yet many farmers are going bankrupt and 450 million people in our world are hungry.

A logical solution to this problem, seemingly, would be to export the surpluses to the hungry overseas.

And shipping food to poor countries is sometimes critically needed. For example, people in some regions of Ethiopia, who would have starved, are now able to eat because of huge food shipments.

But long-term food shipments are not the panacea they appear to be. In fact, some observers feel that food exports, while urgently needed in emergencies like that now facing Ethiopia, if used over the long-term may actually aggravate rather than solve the problems facing the hungry and farmers.

Food imported from North America can depress the farm prices in these Third World countries.

In some cases the inexpensive food we send overseas makes it possible for officials of poor countries to avoid making land reforms, providing adequate farm credit, enacting fair pricing policies and building adequate storage facilities for farm produce.

Repeated food shipments not only discourage overseas governments from increasing their food production but encourage them to become dependent on foreign currency.

Third World countries purchase North American food aid with foreign currency, which means that they are unable to purchase other imports.

Most often their sources of foreign currency are limited, and they feel pressured to earn more foreign currency. They then expand their production of cash crops, such as coffee, sugar and cocoa, which they export for foreign currency. But the production of cash crops means that less land is then available to produce the staple foods that the people in local areas consume.

Pressure on developing countries from U.S. food exporters often interferes with a balanced development program designed to benefit poor people directly. Foreign aid, for example, usually reflects U.S. economic interests and does not promote projects that enhance local food production.

And finally, inexpensive foreign sources of food can change consumption patterns, creating further dependence upon food not grown locally.

Shipping more and more food overseas also hurts U.S. agriculture. The food the U.S. sends overseas does help deplete food reserves, but it also makes farmers dependent on the increased export sales of low-priced grain.

Until the early 1970s, farmers had a relatively steady economic base. With the first Soviet grain sale in 1972, net farm income increased dramatically by 77 percent.

Between 1970 and 1981 the volume of U.S. exports almost tripled. Many observers feel that this emphasis on export agriculture has caused the present U.S. farm debt crisis.

During the 1970s, with the promise of expanded economic return, the value of farmland inflated. The inflated land values increased the base on which farmers could borrow. Inflation and tax and credit policies also encouraged U.S. farmers to borrow heavily, increasing the farm debt.

Then with a decline in food exports, caused by world recession and high interest rates, many farmers were thrust into a severe debt crisis.

But dependence on food exports does more than hurt the pocketbooks of farmers. To produce the extra food needed for the increased exports, farmers began planting fence row to fence row without grass strips between the fields. This results in increased soil erosion. Two-thirds of our prime agricultural lands are losing soil at a rate faster than nature can rebuild it.

Pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers that increase yields are polluting our drinking water. Fossil fuels are being used at an alarming rate.

While it is clear that food aid is a needed short-term response to specific emergency situations, it is also clear that sending subsidized surplus food to hungry people in the Third World is not the most appropriate long-term response to hunger.

While there is not room in this article to discuss in depth what would be appropriate long-term responses to hunger, certainly long-term answers will involve working together to improve food production within poor countries and efforts to relieve poverty in these countries.

If repeated food aid is detrimental to us and them in the long term, we need to face some difficult questions:

- Is it right for the U.S. government to encourage and for us to engage in the overproduction of food, using present unsustainable methods that lead to the degradation of the earth and its resources and thereby further Third World poverty?
- Have we adequately developed theological understandings of the stewardship of creation?
- What are the appropriate ways to use our power and resources to help poor and hungry people?

Those interested in further analysis of the problems discussed in this article should write to Bread for the World and ask for their World Paper No. 72, February 1984, titled *Exploring Surpluses: A Threat to Food Security?* Bread for the World's address is 802 Rhode Island Ave., N.E., Washington, DC 20018. For a single copy, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. *Art Meyer*

**A move to bury chemical wastes** instead of dumping them into lakes and rivers produced cleaner surface water but is now threatening supplies of underground drinking water, U.S. government scientists say. At least 1,000 wells have been declared unsafe for humans, and thousands more have measurable levels of chemical pollution, according to a new government study.

**A Billy Graham Crusade** was held Oct. 14-21 in Vancouver. The average attendance at the eight-day event was about 28,000 each night. Geoffrey Still, a leading Christian lay leader, said the response was beyond what many had expected in Vancouver, a seaport city with only a 2-4 percent church attendance rate. An extra unplanned impetus to the crusade was a food collection project which provided five truckloads of canned goods for hungry Vancouver people.

**Students from Columbia Bible Institute,** Clearbrook, B.C., worked with Mennonite Disaster Service in cleanup operations in Pemberton, B.C., where severe flooding occurred Oct. 7-8. A total of 95 students and faculty volunteered their help, most giving three days of work. Several days later, Oct. 10-11, CBI held its annual missions conference, which focused on the church's responsibility for witness in the world's urban centers. Kenneth Bauman, former General Conference missionary and currently pastor at First Mennonite Church, Berne, Ind., and Peter Kehler, secretary for Asia under the Commission on Overseas Mission, spoke.

# deaths

*Catherine Wiens Neufeld*, longtime "home missions" worker in Chicago, died Nov. 24, at the age of 85 in Marion, S.D. A daughter of the turn-of-the-century founders of Grace Community Church in Chicago, she married John T. Neufeld, and together they continued to pastor the congregation until retirement. She is survived by three sisters, Mary Toews, Inman, Kan.; Martha Ewert, Marion, S.D.; and Helene Dick, Bloomington, Ill.; and five children (Esther Kressly, Chicago; Elvina Martens, Hammon, Okla.; Ernest Neufeld, Freeman, S.D.; Helen C. Coon, Deer Creek, Okla.; and Edith Michalovic, Philadelphia, Miss.).

*H. B. Schmidt*, a retired minister and counselor in peace and service, died Nov. 14 at the age of 83. Schmidt served as pastor of Tabor Mennonite Church, rural Newton, Kan., for 16 years and at Hopefield Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan., for 12 years. He was pastor for five years at the Deer Creek (Okla.) Mennonite Church and served as interim pastor at churches in Liberal, Kan., and Buhler, Kan. During World War II he began a peace counseling ministry for young men, visiting numerous Civilian Public Service camps. In 1958 he was called by the General Conference Board of Christian Service to full-time work as a youth counselor in peace and service. He was married in 1925 in Goessel, Kan., to Rose Schmidt. She lives at Hickory Homes, Hesston, Kan., where the couple moved in 1982. Also surviving are a son, Don, of Hesston; two daughters, Fern Rudiger and Linda Stauffer, both of Newton; a brother, R. B., of rural Newton; and a sister, Augusta Schmidt, of Newton.

# ministers

*Donavin E. Diller* was installed as pastor of Bethel Church, Mountain Lake, Minn., on Nov. 18.

*Henry Funk*, North Star, will begin serving as conference minister for the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan next summer.

*Erwin Wiebe* began serving as pastor of Sterling Fellowship, Winnipeg, on Oct. 21.

# workers

*Lorna Androes*, First Church, Newton, Kan., began a one-year Mennonite Voluntary Service assignment in Markham, Ill., in September as part of the staff of Independence House. Her parents are Robert and Evalena Androes.

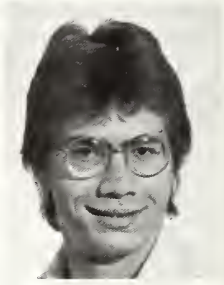
*Nelson* and *Bonita Bock*, Baker, Mont., began a two-year MVS assignment in Arvada, Colo., in September working in the area of peace education. Both have Master of Divinity degrees from Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. His parents are Charles and Nancy Bock of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Bonita's parents are John and Arline Bohning of Prescott, Ariz.

*John Bowman* became manager of the systems development department at Mennonite Mutual Aid Oct. 15.

*Roger Buerkert* has resigned from the position of camp coordinator for the Conference of Mennonites in Saskatchewan effective Sept. 30.

*Lynette Driedger*, Niverville (Man.) Church, is beginning a two-year Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Belle Glade, Fla. She will be working as a nutritionist in a community health clinic. Driedger has a bachelor's degree in human ecology and nutrition from the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg. Her parents are Arthur and Kathleen Driedger of Winnipeg.

*Driedger*



*Epp*

*Friesen*

*Olfert*

*Charles Epp*, Bethesda Church, Henderson, Neb., began a two-year MCC assignment in Washington working in legislative research and advocacy. He holds a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. His parents are Robert O. and Amelia Epp of Henderson.

*Gordon Friesen*, Mountainview Church, Vancouver, will be a truck driver for MCC for two years based in Akron, Pa. His parents are Jack and Betty Friesen of Vancouver.

*Timothy Lee* and *Kristin Isaak Neufeld*, First Church, Lima, Ohio, and

**Approximately 60,000** of Atlanta's residents live in crowded, stark apartment complexes known as public housing. projects. Mennonite Central Committee volunteer Reinhard Heirman of Battle Creek, Mich., has worked with these people through Joint Urban Ministries since July 1983. "JUM is the only Christian organization doing ministry on a broad-based scale in Atlanta's public housing," says Bob Bevis, JUM director. Heirman works with two JUM clusters in the Bankhead Court and Hollywood Court projects. A cluster is a group of congregations who pool resources and expertise to help with the community-building activities in a project.

**All Mennonite students** and others attending Urbana '84, Dec. 27-31, the 14th Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship student missions convention, are invited to First Mennonite Church, 912 W. Springfield, in Urbana, Ill., on Sunday, Dec. 30, at 2 p.m. for fellowship, sharing and refreshments.

**The Lutheran Church in America** voted this past summer to ask its board of pensions to invest "up to 10 percent of the investment portfolio in community development projects." It's believed to be the first time a national church body has requested a board to invest pension money in such a manner.

# RECORD

*Neufelds*

West Swamp Church, Quakertown, Pa., respectively, have begun three-year MCC teaching assignments in Kabwir, Nigeria. Timothy received a bachelor's degree in physics and math from Bluffton (Ohio) College. Kristin received a master's degree in biological sciences from Montana State University and a bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from Bluffton College. His parents are Elmer and LaVera Neufeld of Bluffton. Her parents are Arthur and Marjorie Linscheid Isaak of Sellersville, Pa.

*Brian Olfert*, Bergthaler Church, Winkler, Man., will be working with delinquent youth at Youth Orientation Units, a two-year MCC assignment in Warburg, Alta. His parents are Herman and Elfrieda Olfert of Winkler.

*John Reimer*, Gretna (Man.) Bergthaler Church, is beginning a two-year MCC assignment in Moncton, N.B., as a peer counselor.

*Len Sawatsky* has been appointed public relations officer for the Eden Mental Health Centre in Winkler, Man.

*Karl Sommers* began as manager of corporate planning at Mennonite Mutual Aid Nov. 1.

*Kira Yoder* became manager of the records department at Mennonite Mutual Aid Nov. 5.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Arnaldy Quismundo, representing the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, is a missionary "on the grow." Although she and her husband Jorge look back on thirty-two years in overseas Christian mission, they are quick to say there is always more to learn. And that's why this year they are in residence at OMSC. Apply now for residence (1985 and beyond) and any of the announced courses and seminars.

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**Blacks in Mission: To America and Beyond.** Ms. Mary Jane Patterson, Washington Office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Dr. Gayraud S. Wilmore, New York Theological Seminary, Dr. J. Oscar McCloud, Program Agency, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Co-sponsored by Center of Continuing Education, Princeton Theological Seminary, *at Princeton.*

**FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 1**
**Health-care Issues in the Two-Thirds World: An Indian Christian Perspective.** Dr. L. B. M. Joseph, Director, Vellore Christian Medical College and Hospital, India.

***MARCH 4-8**
**Social Change Through Non-Violence: The Witness of Scripture and Experience.** Dr. Hildegard Goss-Mayr, Vice-President, International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Dr. Richard Baggett Deats, U.S. Director, F.O.R. Co-sponsored by F.O.R. and Maryknoll Mission Institute, *at Maryknoll, N.Y.*

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**The Gospel in Context: The Why and How of Responsible Witness.** Dr. Charles R. Taber, Emmanuel School of Religion, formerly with United Bible Societies in West Africa.

***MARCH 18-22**
**Relief and Development: Mission's New Hot Potato.** Dr. Ted Ward, Institute for International Education, Michigan State University, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Co-sponsored by Christian Reformed World Relief, World Concern, World Relief Corporation (NAE), and World Vision International.

**MARCH 26-29**
**"Sinai," "Zion," and "Jubilee": Three Models of Mission in the Third World.** Dr. James M. Phillips, Associate Director, OMSC.

**APRIL 9-12**
**Christian Witness in the Turmoil of the Middle East.** Dr. Norman A. Horner, former Associate Director, OMSC.

***APRIL 15-19**
**"Unreached Peoples"—An Anthropologist Looks at Evangelical Approaches to the Unfinished Task.** Dr. Miriam Adeney, Seattle Pacific University, and Regent College. Co-sponsored by Christian and Missionary Alliance, Liebenzell Mission, OMS International, SIM International, and Worldwide Evangelization Crusade.

***APRIL 22-26**
**Evangelizing World Class Cities.** Dr. Raymond J. Bakke, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Lausanne Associate for Urban Ministries; and Vinay Samuel, Evangelical Fellowship of India. Co-sponsored by InterVarsity Evangelism, Latin America Mission, Theological Students Fellowship, World Evangelical Fellowship, and World Vision.

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## Needs clarification

I read the article "A Voice in Ramah" by Mel D. Friesen (Sept. 11 issue) and didn't get anything out of it. Then I got to the bottom where it said the article was a biblical commentary on the growing problem of child abuse. Being very interested in the issue of child abuse, I thought I would read it again. After the second reading I still didn't get the author's point. Would it be possible to have clarification on the above-mentioned article and/or other articles on this subject? *Debra Schultz, 122 SW 3rd, Newton, KS 67114*

Oct. 4

*Mel's response: "A Voice in Rahmah" was prompted by a local news event about a 2-year-old who was physically beaten to death by her stepfather. I attempted to compile various Bible references that related to the themes of child abuse and the sovereignty of God's involvement throughout history.*

*The three primary areas used in handling the abuse theme are as follows: (1)* Personal and family issues*: I referred to the family feud and favoritism with Isaac and Rebecca as well as Joseph and his brothers.*

*2.* Religious issues*: I referred to Abraham's adherence to God's will even to the point of sacrificing his son literally until the final moment when God intervened. God was calling Abraham to faithfulness, not sacrificing his child as a ritual for worship.*

*3.* Political and judicial issues*: The Pharaoh and Herod felt threatened by the Israelites. In their distrust and fear, governments murdered innocent children to assure stability, power and control. Also, the courts in biblical times often neglected the needs of the orphans and widows.*

*It seems many of the issues in the biblical times are alive in our society today. We are seeing our children suffer for the sins of adults. Adults are blindly overlooking their personal problems and refuse to resolve their conflicts. Who suffers when adults refuse counseling to deal with their personal problems? Or refuse supportive assistance through the church body?*

*Or when adults subscribe to religious sects or denominations that reinforce corporal punishment, saying it is the will of God? Who suffers?*

*I tried to remind readers about the birth of Jesus, who came into the world as a child and who often used children as models for the kingdom of God.*

*I appreciate your response and hope the dialogue can continue.*

## Black Mennonites?

My answer (Sept. 11 issue) to Hubert Brown's question "Can I Be Black and Mennonite?" had little to do with skin color. It is difficult for *anyone* not born to it to become a Mennonite because of the ethnic character of the group.

Barbra Gant (Oct. 23 issue) threatens to move on if she ever becomes convinced it is impossible for blacks to become Mennonites. How typically Mennonite. Mennonites walk out over any difference in point of view. That's one reason there are so many splinter groups. Should we have rubber tires or iron tires on our tractors, i.e. among those of us who remain after the walkout over the issue of whether we should have tractors at all. This unwillingness to broaden the perspective to accommodate a wider range of opinions keeps the entire Mennonite congregation small and makes it difficult for outsiders to join.

Gant's description of slavery is graphic, but I wonder if it would impress a religious martyr standing on a pile of burning faggots with the flames lapping up around his ankles. On this point, obviously, she and I are indulging in a senseless argument. She has no more idea what it is like to be a slave than I know what it is like to be a martyr (though, if I keep writing letters like this I might find out).

Some years ago Garret Morris, a black comedian on *Saturday Night Live*, established a "White Guilt Relief Fund" for people like Ms. Gant and Terry Miller (Oct. 23 issue). Why don't they each contribute a dollar to clear their consciences so we can all get on about the business of living together? *Gary D. Jensen, 113 Willenberg Road, Lake Jackson, TX 77566*

Nov. 5

*Editor's note: Gary's letter does not appear in its entirety. While we encourage ongoing dialogue, please keep responses brief so we can print all of them.*

## Healing at Dialogue

I was one of the diverse group at the Dialogue on Faith, Oct. 26-28. People came with a variety of motives. I came to listen. I also happened to come full of deep pain, grief—even shame—and longing for wholeness in my life.

People came to discuss issues that divide us and cause us pain. I did too. But as fate would have it, I came with a far more immediate sense of personal pain and loss than I would have thought was possible.

I have good news. Over and over again people asked appropriate questions and I was able to share my pain. In every case there was a compassionate desire to simply be present as healing, caring, loving friends. And so after a long time of difficulty and danger, I find myself amazingly healed by people who were not afraid to touch wounds that were raw and to simply shine like the face of Christ—full of tears and grace.

I learned a lesson I already knew. Behind every issue there are people by the hundreds and thousands who hurt, people who need help, people who are so desperate they may not make it until we decide whether or not we can tolerate the issue that hides them (or pushes them into the limelight).

The General Conference will always be alive and well, as will be all of Christ's church, so long as there are people who care enough to really touch wounds, hold hands, share tears and live out Christ's love. We can't afford to be divided from each other over issues when what we all really need and want is love. I truly discovered that. People came through when I needed them. There is great hope for us if we can accept and love each other in Christ and look beyond our feelings about issues to the hurting people behind those issues.

The people at Dialogue on Faith also gave a generous offering to help with travel expenses of those who needed aid. I am one of those who needed and received travel help. It was anonymously given and anonymously received. You should at least know that it gave life. *From one who found grace among you (anonymous by request)*

Nov. 9

## Meant constructively

It was sad to read the response of G. Henry Schmitt (Sept. 25 issue) to Hubert Brown's article "Can I Be Black and Mennonite." At the risk of sounding stereotypic, his language is anything but the language of those who understand that we are our brothers' keepers. If I had not been around and among the Mennonites for the past 15 years, it would have been difficult for me to understand the language Schmitt used. To

me it sounded like a political scenario or rhetoric. Where and when do we Christians begin to remind others that they should pull themselves up by their bootstraps? The language is neither Mennonite in spirit nor biblical in theology. It is more a typical American cultural and political language.

I am sure Schmitt does not mean any harm. Our pastor, Daniel Slabaugh, has often said that our short time together on Sunday morning does not and cannot represent the experience that our lifestyle should represent. Instead, it is what happens Monday through Saturday that counts. To welcome the blacks or whites during church services does not amount to anything. It is what the church members do and how they relate to either the blacks or whites outside the church during the subsequent days that really counts. I am sure Brown was talking about an issue that goes beyond the routine of welcoming someone during the Sunday morning services.

I do not know of any text in our 450-year Mennonite history on which Schmitt bases his application to American blacks. Certainly Mennonites are hard working peoples and so are many other ethnic groups. The Mennonites are generous people. It is their spirit more than anything that strikes a non-Mennonite to ask who these people are. If Schmitt can recollect the artistic implications of the films *Hazel's People*, *All Quiet on the Western Front* or *The Quiet in the Land*, he could take Brown's article as a gentle, constructive criticism of our diversified lifestyles. *O. Chibuzor Ozor, 1025 Hasper Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48103*

Nov. 13

## Pluralism and authority

J. Denny Weaver does a service in reminding us that pluralistic views have been a part of Anabaptism from its origins (Oct. 23 issue). While I might wish that my brothers and sisters conformed more closely to my views, Jesus taught that a wide diversity of elements would always be found in the kingdom of God while it is upon earth (Matthew 13:47-50). This we must accept and affirm.

I have not read the newer scholarship Weaver uses to lend authority to his propositions. However, I am not comfortable when he states that this recent scholarship marks the advent of a new era which sees Anabaptism in a continual state of change as it seeks to meet present and future needs of society. It must be formed by a process of "searching and testing," since all situations "contain ambiguity." Since it is theology in "continuing process," there are "no definite role models for us to follow."

What place does this view allow for the authority of the Bible? Weaver does not mention it among the "handed-down ideas" to be maintained in order to retain our historic Anabaptist designation. I am left with the impression that the primary focus of the church is a cluster of sociological principles. He implies that Bender's assertion that "the Bible was the chief source of the theology of Conrad Grebel and the Swiss Brethren" is no longer adequate, reminding us that their thinking as humans was "fallible."

The authority of the Bible was the main pillar of belief of the Reformers in general and of the Radical (Anabaptist) Reformers in particular. The break with Zwingli hinged on his low view of the authority of the Bible. This was a view held well beyond the Swiss Brethren. (I would be surprised to learn that only they were branded as "biblicists.") The Early Three were certainly fallible, but this was not a trait either they or their followers attributed to the Bible in which they believed and which they so vigorously defended.

While changing demands of society require that we continually re-evaluate our interpretation of Scripture, at that point where we cut ourselves free from its ultimate authority we will be blown by every change of wind and will be open even to Satanic delusions.

I could be wrong, but I seem to discern in Weaver's conclusions the effects of a form of situation ethics which has the potential for muddying lines of ethical definition and of a form of liberation theology which allows contemporary culture alone to write the theological agenda. *Levi Keidel, Box 1170, Sumas, WA 98295*

Nov. 13


## Pastor needed

**Zion Mennonite Church,** Souderton, Pa., has an opening on their pastoral team. Position available immediately.

For more information contact:
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# The first Santa Claus

*John J. Dunne*

When the fame of Saint Nicholas, the wonderful miracle-worker of Asia Minor, was brought to Europe, the Latin form of his name, Sanctus Nicolaus, was translated into the languages of the various countries where his popularity was growing.

In Germany he became Sankt Nikolaus, in Holland Sint Nicolaas, and later, Sinta Klaes, transitions which were bringing it closer all the time to the English version, Santa Claus, which we know today.

St. Nicholas, whose love of children and generosity to the poor was the fount from which a hundred legends sprung, was born about the year 270 in the coastal town of Patara in the province of Lycia, Asia Minor.

Even during his lifetime he was considered the patron of children, and his association with young people has endured in tradition through the centuries.

It lives today in many lands and with peoples of all creeds in that story of the kind old gentleman who comes to distribute gifts to little children at Christmas—the white-bearded, red-cloaked old soul called Santa Claus.

Born of well-to-do Christian parents in Lycia, which had been visited by Paul during his missionary journeys, Nicholas, if legend has it correctly, showed early signs of devotion. He is said to have started praying when only a few days old, and when still a baby he refused all food on Wednesdays, the day on which Christians fasted.

When Nicholas was a young man, an epidemic laid waste most of his province, and his parents were two of its many victims. As an only child he inherited their property, but it was not long in his possession before his great generosity made big demands upon it.

When he heard of a merchant who had lost all and who was consequently unable to supply doweries for his three daughters, Nicholas secretly dropped a bag of gold coins into the man's house so that one of the daughters was able to marry.

When the time came for the second girl to wed, Nicholas repeated the performance, and later he did the same for the third daughter. But on the third occasion the merchant discovered the identity of his mysterious benefactor and spread the news of Nicholas' kindness everywhere, with the result that the saint was besieged by people asking alms.

The legend of the three bags of gold given by Nicholas to the merchant is said to be remembered today in the three gilded balls that hang outside pawnbrokers' shops throughout the world.

Because of this early act of charity, Nicholas has long been considered the patron of young girls of marriageable age, and on the island of Malta in the Mediterranean there are several churches where bequests are made for endowments that are drawn annually on Dec. 6, the saint's feast day.

When the Bishop of Myra died, Nicholas, still a youth, was appointed—it is said by divine guidance—his successor and was forthwith called upon to perform a miracle.

One of the women who had been present at the election of the new bishop returned home to find that her son had been burned to death in her absence. Taking the boy's body back to the church, she implored Saint Nicholas to restore him to life.

This the saint did, thereby starting for himself a reputation of being "the greatest wonder-worker of all the saints in Christendom."

Also considered the patron of sailors, Nicholas began his association with ships and seamen when he set forth on a journey to Palestine to make a pilgrimage to the holy places.

When the ship ran into severe storms on the way, he prayed and the storms were quelled. He stopped at Alexandria in Egypt to pray at the tomb of Saint

Mark and continued on to Jerusalem and Bethlehem. After some time, wishing to return, he engaged a ship to take him to Syria. Shortly after putting to sea, the captain decided it would be more to his advantage to go on a trading mission to Egypt, so he altered course. The ship ran into a severe storm and came in grave danger of sinking. The scared captain confessed to Nicholas what he had done and begged the saint to pray for their safe deliverance. This Nicholas did, and the storm abated. The chastened captain then sailed for the original destination.

This legend survives in the old custom of seamen wishing each other at the outset of a voyage that "Saint Nicholas may hold the tiller."

Dutch seamen brought the fame of Nicholas home with them and it spread to northern Europe. In Holland Santa Claus comes on Dec. 6. In England the figure of Saint Nicholas is to be found in the 13th-century seal of the corporation of the great fishing port of Yarmouth.

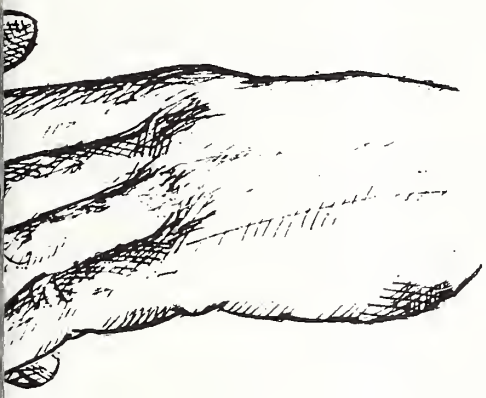
Robbers were another section of the community that quickly claimed Nicholas as their patron saint. During the persecution of the Christians under the reign of Diocletian and other Roman emperors before Constantine embraced Christianity, Nicholas spent many years in prison. And during that time he held out a helping hand to many robbers.

In England, robbers or highwaymen were called "clerks of Saint Nicholas," while in the cathedral of Chartres in France there is a stained-glass window which depicts Nicholas helping a robber


## Pastor needed

**The Zoar Mennonite Church** of Langham, Sask., invites applications for the position of pastor. Starting time is **July-August 1985**. A congregational profile is available at Conference of Mennonites in Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4.

Please address all applications to:
Melvin Wiebe, congregational chairman
Box 213
Langham, SK S0K 2L0
(306) 283-4710.



so that he might reform. This phase of his life is commemorated in the church in Rome called San Nicola in Carcere.

But it is to children and to youth that Saint Nicholas truly belongs, a point emphasized by early biographers like St. Methodius and St. Roman.

The stories that link his name with children are numerous. In the year 325, while on his way to the Council of Bishops at Nicea, Nicholas stayed overnight at a lonely inn, where he restored to life three young boys who had been murdered by the innkeeper. When the Roman governor unjustly condemned three young officers to death, a vision of Nicholas appeared to the Emperor Constantine, informing him of the injustice in time for the executions to be called off.

Numerous other miracles, many of them happening during his lifetime, are attributed to Nicholas. When his province of Lycia was stricken by famine, he supplied food to such a bountiful extent that historian Andrew of Crete declared that having him around the place was as good as having a grain-distributing warehouse.

After his death on Dec. 6, 341, his fame spread rapidly throughout most of the known world. Russian sailors plying to Constantinople in the ninth century brought back stories about him, and he became the patron of Russia, where several of the czars were named after him.

He also became the patron of Greece, where to the present-day Nicholas is a common name. He is also the patron of places as far apart as Aberdeen and Liege, Fribourg and Amsterdam and Corfu.

The body of Saint Nicholas lies in a tomb in the Cathedral of Bari, a coastal town on the heel of Italy, to where it was taken from Myra in 1087 for protection from the Saracens, who had overrun the Holy Land and Asia Minor. His body arrived at Bari on May 9, and the anniversary of its arrival is still celebrated in ceremonies which overcrowd the town with pilgrims and last several days.

While the Christmas tree is generally thought to have pagan origins, legend connects it also with Saint Nicholas. One day he is said to have pointed to a tall tree and to have exclaimed, "Look at the way this tree rises toward the sky. In the same way your soul must rise toward the true God."

*Saint Nicholas began as one who gave a hand to people in need. It is regrettable that we have turned him into a roly-poly fat man with "magic" powers that seem so contrary to the Christ of Christmas.*

*John J. Dunne, 300 Howth Road, Dublin 5, Ireland, is a free-lance writer.*

## Christmas Eve on the highway

*Ruth Naylor*

This is the time to be at home
By the fire
Warm with family love.
Yet the road to Bethlehem
Was being traveled
Nearly two centuries ago
In the dark night
Before redeeming Love
Was born.

Even though we feel alone
Tonight amid a hoard
Of fellow travelers,
Should we begrudge
The Holiday Inn
Where we will register
And find comfort—
Accommodation?

No star is seen
To light the way
Tonight.
Show us, Lord,
How we can share
Christmas among all these
Whom we don't know.

# Two visions

*Peter J. Ediger*

1. *Isaiah: 740 B.C.*
It shall come to pass
in the latter days
that the mountain
of the house of the Lord
shall be established
as the highest of the mountains. . . .
For out of Zion
shall go forth the law
and the word of the Lord
from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between nations
and shall decide for many peoples;
they shall beat their
swords into plowshares
and their
spears into pruning hooks.
Nation shall not
lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they
learn war anymore. . . .
Come let us walk in the
light of the Lord *(Isaiah 2:2-4).*

2. *Ivan and Sam: 1984 A.D.*
It shall come to pass
in the latter days
that the mountains of the budgets
of the Kremlin and the Pentagon
shall be established
as the highest of the mountains. . . .
For out of Moscow and Washington
shall go forth lawless weapons
and the word of the god of Mars
from the Pentagon and the Kremlin.
They shall fight between nations
and shall decimate many peoples;
they shall beat their
plowshares into submarines
and their
bread into bombs.
Nation shall
lift up arms against nation,
they shall
teach war forevermore. . . .
Come let us walk in the
shadow of the Kremlin and the
Pentagon *(Ivan and Sam: 1984-??).*

# Whose Christmas was best?

*(Written by Tena Penner, Christmas 1983. Tena is the mother of missionary Leila Penner in Haiti and is a member of the Rosthern, Sask., Mennonite Church.)*

I would like to share something with you. I am wondering who had the best and blessed Christmas in our family.

Ours started with a meaningful Christmas Eve program in our church. The program was presented by the Sunday school pupils and the church choir.

Three of our four children were home. We did many things as a family. We went to suppers and functions together. The children did things like skating, curling and skiing with their friends. We sang, had Christmas dinner together, opened gifts and were happy with our gifts. It was just a good holiday. So now I would like to share a paragraph of Leila's letter with you. (She's the one that was missing from our family.)

"This Christmas holiday I've been reading much in the Old Testament. I'm now reading Ezekiel, and over the past few days have read Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. I've been so blessed—the compassion of our God is great. It's amazed me to read how evil the people were and lived, and how they lived lives so displeasing to God and how often they hurt him so, and still he had compassion and forgave them and so often spared their lives. My compassion is so small in comparison. It's been good to refresh my mind and see the love, kindness, goodness, justice and compassion of our God. I'm marking up my big Bible for the first time and it's been so exciting—I've marked so many verses it's almost like reading it for the first time. It's been nice over this Christmas vacation to have the time for that. I could have felt sorry for myself because this Christmas was quiet and I spent much of it alone, but instead I considered myself one of the blessed ones to be able to celebrate Christmas in the quiet and peaceful presence of the Lord. It was really special."

Who of us had the best Christmas that year?

# MEDITATION

## Christmas means to me

About 30 years ago when I was growing up, Christmas was a lot different than it is now. We had Christmas dinner like we do now, but our meal would include roast beaver stuffed with wild rice and mushrooms. We also had turnips, carrots, cabbage and potatoes. The women would start cooking and baking two or three days before Christmas so that everything would be ready for the big feast.

Each household would prepare a feast, and all the people would go from house to house, feasting at each place as they went.

When times were hard, people didn't have money to spend on gifts for each other. The money was needed for food and clothing. Sometimes my mother would give us gifts she had made or she would sell things she made to make money for gifts for us.

We had services at the church on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. Just about everyone would go to these services. Now people don't have much interest in going to church on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day. They would rather stay home and celebrate by partying and drinking. Before becoming a Christian, it was for me also a time for celebrating by drinking.

Now that I have become a different person in Christ, Christmas means different things to me. I learned that drinking and celebrating is not the way to celebrate Jesus' birthday. Christmas is a time to share love with each other and to share the love of Jesus. It is a time to give gifts to friends and relatives. In our family we pick names and give gifts to each other.

Sometimes I think I like the old way of celebrating Christmas better than the way we do it now. We had a better way of sharing with each other. Now people don't want to share their Christmas dinner with anyone unless they have been invited to their house. Sharing is a part of Christmas, and we need to learn how to share with each other as we did a long time ago.

*Alfred Favel*

## Christmas today

A little child
To the world he came,
And they knew him not,
Neither called his name.
To a coldhearted world,
Angels sang of his birth—
But the rich, busy people,
Never claimed his worth. . . .

Is it so much different
In the world today,
As it was long ago,
'Round the manger of hay?

Do we busy, rich people
Recognize the son?
As we push and shove
'Til his birthday is done?

If the Babe in the manger
Could speak today,
He would say, "Busy world,
Slow down for my day,
Keep your hearts open wide,
For my presence divine—
And the light of my love,
'Round the whole world
will shine."

*Dorothy Baumgartner*

# CONTENTS

On the one hand Christmas is commercialism in its most crass form. Sentimentality and wishful thinking are manipulated to extremes.

At the same time Christmas remains the grandest mystery and the ultimate wonder. It is at least one time each year when our rational blinders are exploded and overcome by a divine drama that defies all the odds and keeps on unfolding among us. New life and hope is born in the most unexpected places and in totally unpredictable ways. God comes among us in unmistakable fashion. Let's give him the praise in the midst of all the grim realities so readily evident in our world. He is Lord!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THE MENNONITE

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*God's peace to all of you from* The Mennonite *staff*

# editorial

## *The quality of God's mercy*

"And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation . . . he has put down the mighty . . . and exalted those of low degree . . . in remembrance of his mercy. . . (Luke 1:50-54).

Shakespeare has Portia say, "The quality of mercy is not strain'd. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: it blesseth him that gives and him that takes" (*The Merchant of Venice*, Act 4, Scene 1).

Christmas shows us the quality of God's mercy. At Bethlehem the High and Holy One of heaven, the Wholly Other, God in the infant Jesus comes inside of us—born in flesh that feels pain even as you and I do. The Almighty comes weak and helpless. Eternity's Master becomes a suckling baby. He whose gaze no one can fully encounter is presented in a stable under the gaze of passive cattle.

"Mercy" comes from the Hebrew "chesedh." It suggests that one can become so much one with another that the one will think as the other thinks, feel as the other feels, even see as the other sees. Counselors call it empathy. Strangers call it "walking in my shoes." The Bible explains it as incarnation (John 1:1-18). Jesus taught, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

Looking casually upon today's world, we could conclude that every ounce of God's mercy is being dreadfully tested and strained.

In Canada a national study on sexual offenses against children and youth reported this fall that one in two females and one in three males are victims of unwanted sexual acts. About four in five of all victims were under age 21 when the first offenses occurred (*Vis-a-Vis*, Autumn 1984, p. 1).

Pornography is a mushrooming business based on human degradation and exploitation.

Spouse abuse is coming to light as a common violence even in Christian homes.

The nuclear and other military budget *annually* spent to learn how to kill more effectively has reached $500 billion dollars.

At times it is easy to agree with Snoopy's philosophizing in Charles Schultz's "Peanuts" cartoon. Snoopy watches people and muses, "I wonder why some of us were born dogs while others were born people. . . . Somehow the whole thing does not seem fair. . . . Why should *I* have been the lucky one?"

Christmas reminds us again of the truth. Sometimes it seems barely audible, but it is there.

Mary, a young nobody from nowhere, is pregnant out of wedlock. A familiar enough dilemma. We can feel the "poor me" response.

But Mary shocks her boyfriend, her family and the whole world. Instead of rebellion in self-pity, she sees hers not as a fate but as a mission. She is not cursed but begraced. Hers is not the lot of one picked upon. God has chosen her to share his mercy.

Unbelievable! Unpredictable! Unlikely! Unusual! Unreasonable! All of that and more. The father of all mercies puts himself at the mercy of a teenage girl and through her at the mercy of all the community gossip chains.

To people who do not want to believe in God, this seems the ultimate absurdity. For those who believe in the Holy Otherness of God, it feels like an unnecessary lowering. Doubters find in it little challenge to their misgivings.

That's partly why Christmas gets routine at times. We can't fathom God's mercy at Bethlehem, so we grab the tinsel, admire the pageant and eat too much of the food.

It's also why Christmas is always new. Our finiteness can never comprehend fully nor exhaust the wonder of it all. God's mercy in Jesus waits to surprise us all—all the time, but specially at Christmas.

In natural revelation we see a beautiful God, but at times he is also harsh. The biblical revelation shows God as one who keeps his promises and expects us to join ourselves to him in covenants we shall also keep. At Bethlehem he comes in a merciful invitation that can only create awe and adoration to all seekers—from nearby shepherds to wise scholars in distant lands. Of course, it irritates those who proclaim their own might.

Somehow God finds blessing in showing us his mercy. He finds blessing again as we receive his mercy.

We too can be twice blessed. Show godly mercy and rejoice as it is received. It spreads like a gentle rain from heaven. *Bernie Wiebe*

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